The Lord's Day

Prophecy for a New Era

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PREFACE

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This volume is written primarily for Christians who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good (Ps.34:7-11), and who are determined to press on into all the Lord has ready for them, no matter what the cost. There is 'spiritual milk' included, but there is also much 'meat' (Heb. 5:11 to Heb.6:3). For some the 'meat' will bring valued nourishment; for others the 'meat' may bring a type of indigestion. This prophetic material is not appointed for casual or careless listening or reading, and if the inquirer is unwilling to examine all of the Scriptural references within their context and if his approach does not include an earnest and prior asking God for the progressive revealing of truth that He has promised through His Holy Spirit, that reader may not yet be ready for this revealing (Acts.17:11).

It is probably fair to predict that there will be very little middle ground on which to stand while taking up this study. For most readers, this expansion of the prophecies in Scripture either will be rejected as not being 'a word for them', or it will promote a burning desire to become perfectly dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ, His will, His desires, His purposes and His objectives. These Christians who truly mean business with the Lord will increasingly understand that there is much more in His plan for them than the initial cleansing by the blood of Christ, much more than the initial regeneration of being born again, much more than a subsequent experience with the Holy Spirit, and much more than living a moral 'clean' life while hopefully, perhaps passively, waiting for God to surround and inundate them on some future day in some far away place with His perfect righteousness. These who understand and obediently respond will become the well-trained and equipped army which can brilliantly defeat the enemy and will be that many-membered Body which is made reliable and responsible under the command of Jesus Christ Who is the Head (Eph.4:12-13). His perfect plan is for bringing all that He has to every Christian who is willing and eager to possess His magnificent abundance through Jesus Christ (John 16: 14-15, Eph.1:3, 2:18-22, ICor. 2:9-11).

INTRODUCTION

All of prophecy in the Old and the New Testament points to its complete fulfillment by the events and within the time period described by the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation is written to and for potential overcomers, those who continue to follow God wholly, and it is a Book that promises great blessing, power, wisdom, protection and preservation to overcomers. It contains a positive message of assurance and confidence for God's people and the negative and destructive aspects are not to dominate the glorious message of grace and certain victory to the overcomers. The Book of Revelation is the revealing of God's wind-up of His plans and works in this Age and His beginning a new work in the new Age. During every stage of the development of His plans, He has promised to provide attractive opportunities and wonderful advancements for all who will wholly follow Him, and these promises are applicable during our physical life on earth as well as to that spiritual life in which we are expected to grow. Because all men are not willing and will not choose to abandon the thought that it is possible to live victoriously and to be righteous through personal resources, and because of men's personal attachment to things (a desire, a teaching, an institution, a tradition, a movement, a person, or a possession), there is a limitation in fulfillment of God's plan in those men.

Because of this general condition of apathy in many and rebellion in many, God sees a poor 'building' constructed of men's ways, works and ambitions in the place of and obstructing the fulfillment of His intended purpose in erecting the glorious structure of His eternal 'Body of Christ' Temple. There is no other course of action but to raze and demolish the old broken and decayed building with its accumulation of rubbish and debris, in order to clear the ground and make way for His new, beautiful and efficient structure. Our Lord is busy selecting and gathering workmen and material for building, even as the demolition proceeds. It seems clear, therefore, that His workers must know the plan for the progressive razing in considerable detail, if they are to keep clear of falling debris and be kept safe as the old edifice is brought to nought (on protection, see Ps. 91). At the outset we wish to be sure of seeing the promises God has made to His 'overcomers', those who have come over, but let us also receive His conditions, admonitions and warnings. The builders and inhabitants of the broken and decayed building do not wish to lose their handiwork and will continually lobby for slow-down and cessation among the Lord's workers.

In Matt.24:24, God warns there is danger that even the 'elect' would be deceived in the end-times if they do not have the Lord's warning and preparation firmly in mind. If there is great danger of so thorough a deceit, what chance will there be for any to escape being subverted by Satan if God's warnings are not understood and taken seriously. If the end-time

is at hand, we have a great need - NOW! If end-times are some time off, we still make no mistake to live in preparation for them, because doing so entails an hour by hour, moment by moment preparation for walking with Christ, letting Him live His life through us, enabling continued knowledge of and obedience to His will. Therefore, there is no good reason why we should not prepare as if the end-times are ready to start. Even so, there is much evidence now that the final preparations for the great day of the Lord are already well under way.

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES:

1. To commit God's plan to our minds to the extent that, if necessary, we could continue to live within His plan even if the Bible were made inaccessible to us. Already in a large portion of the world, the Bible has been burned and is not available for ready reference and guidance. The Lord has warned of much opposition coming within our nation.

2. To obey God's command (Rev. 22:10) that the Words of this Book must be made known and must be understood, for the period of fulfillment is near. Blessed is he who hears and keeps himself true to the things of this prophecy (Rev. 1:3), for the time is near. This is the only book of the Bible that calls out such a blessing so specifically.

3. To explore and reconfirm what qualifications are necessary in order to enter the presence of the Lord, but especially during this coming period of tribulation.

4. To know the signs of the end-time approach and to know what will transpire, otherwise the lies put out by Satan through respectable sources will not be recognized. Without the knowledge, even the saints would be deceived. An acceptance or even a permissive attitude toward these frauds could mean a personal loss of everything (Rev.14:9-10, 19:20-21).

5. Casual acceptance of the facts that appear convincing to another may bring no personal advantage. Man-generated faith in a fallible source may itself fall under stress. You must by your efforts enable the Holy Spirit to convince YOU. Therefore, diligent use of Scripture is a basic requirement for attaining the benefits from this study (Acts.17:11).

Although mostly overlooked, God's Commandment prohibits our interpreting the Bible. If no man is to guess at God's interpretation (though many and varied interpretations are being pushed), there is only One, The Holy Spirit, Who is to lead into all Truth and we need to ask The Lord Jesus, for He has promised to answer by the Holy Spirit, through the Word (John 16:13). Therefore, these notes are not a presentation of multiple-choice interpretations of Scripture, nor of one man's opinion on what 'must have been God's intent'. This presentation is derived from the Word of prophecy, it sometimes is in

contrast with man's ideas and it must be held up to the Lord Jesus by each reader for His confirmation or rejection as His Truth (Isa.8:20). No prophecy of Scripture is a matter for personal or private interpretation, for no prophecy ever originated because some man willed to do so, but prophecy originated as men spoke from God, men who were borne along by the Holy Spirit (2Pet.1:20-21). Things are hidden temporarily only as a means to revelation. For there is nothing hidden except to be revealed, nor is anything kept secret except in order that it be made known (Mk.4:22-24, Matt.10:26).

So you will do well to pay close attention to the prophetic Word, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day breaks through the gloom (2Pet.1:19). However, do not put faith in every spirit, but prove or test the spirits to discover whether they proceed from God, for many false prophets have gone forth into the world (IJohn 4:1). Do not spurn or depreciate prophetic revelation nor despise inspired instruction, but test and prove all things until you recognize what is good. To that hold fast (IThess.5:20-21). Refute and refuse arguments, theories and reasonings which are set against the true knowledge of God (all initiated in the mind) and lead every thought and purpose away captive into obedience to Christ (2Cor.10:5). Until we attain to completeness and maturity, we all see through the glass darkly, a blurred and dimmed image, but then we shall see clearly as face to face, then we shall know and understand fully (ICor.13:10-12, Jer.23:20, Dan.12:4). People 2000 years ago, 100 years ago, even 50 years ago had no need for the secrets to be revealed as is now necessary for our end-time generation. The end-time revealing, as the perfection of Jesus Christ in us comes closer, the face to face seeing, the full understanding, has been reserved for the end-time people, and the unveiling or unlocking of secrets is now being provided by the Lord to those alert, watching, desiring and asking. But discernment is necessary to escape deceit (Rev.12:9).

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PREPARATION FOR CHRIST'S COMING

In this study on preparation for the second coming of Jesus Christ, we are not to allow the negative aspects of the Bible prophecies or of man's current views of trouble for the world to dominate our thinking. Although it is true, from the viewpoint of the spiritual world, the issue is that of the destruction of the human race, with the forces of Satan on one side of the issue and the forces of God on the other, we must bring our minds to recognize the positive aspects as well as the negative. The future we can 'see' with our senses indicates that man has permitted Satan's hordes to almost arrive at such a point of complete destruction of the race, but there is an escape and a full protection which can be engaged, if the individual man will enter by the way or pattern which God designed (Pro.3:25-26). To step out of His pattern either ignorantly or wilfully means to step out of His protection; therefore, we will wish to see the pattern clearly.

THE TIMES FROM MAN'S VIEWPOINT

First let's take a look at the world system strictly from the materialistic viewpoint, a look at where men (Christian and non-Christian) think, or think they know, we are now in the 70s. Following are comments from a scattering of well-educated people who are credited with being experts and knowing some of the facts. It may be noticed how thoroughly concurrent many of our crises are with others of equal or greater severity and how the overlaying unavoidably intensifies and makes critical even that which might easily be handled by itself. Over one-half of all the people who have ever been alive on the earth since Adam are living right now, using up and abusing the earth's resources faster than they can be replenished. It took approximately 4800 years since Noah to 1930 AD to build the world's population up to 2 billion, and it will take only from 1930 to 1975 to have added another 2 billion. But the resources of this planet can only support the present 3.6 billion of 1970 on a mediocre diet without over-exploiting and destroying the planet's capability for producing food. When their diet is poor, people grow up mentally deficient and weaker, are less able to contribute toward producing all that is needed and are less able to efficiently distribute and use whatever is available. The world population doubling time is now about 35 years, but, in the under-developed, poorer countries, the doubling time is less and in some is only 20 years. Therefore, it can be seen that there are proportionally more and more people weakened in mind and body, using up resources increasingly inefficiently in a time when there is already an inadequate reservoir of resources even to properly feed and support the present population on our planet. Not only is our globe being overfilled, but we have more and more people running around destroying the capacity of the planet to support its living systems.

World-wide plagues are a real threat, due not only to overpopulation, but even more due to the existance of weakened peoples. More than once, recently, it has been only because of divine providence that a deadly virus did not slip out of the laboratory to kill millions in

a short period of time. Even so, new diseases never seen before and disquieting variants of more familiar diseases are appearing increasingly. In January, 1971, TV newscasting made mention of a warning being sent out to physicians that the world is on the verge of several wide-spread, epidemic plagues. It has been calculated that with the present pattern of automobile use, by 1990 the air in the USA will be so polluted that survival will be in question. With the projected growth in facilities for generating power, using present methods, all the oxygen generated by green plants will be consumed by combustion for power by 2030. The US population increased 11% during 1960-68, but crime increased 122% and the increase in crime continues at much higher rates. Earthquakes and volcano activity is anticipated almost any day which will adversely affect weather, agriculture, distribution of water and power, air contamination, etc. Destructive tsunamis, storms and floods of greater intensity are also expected. Just one year of bad weather would result in there being no food surplus in the USA and Canada. Rebellion of people is moving in the direction which, if continuously intensified as is the pattern, would engulf whole nations within just a few years; a few nations already are. In 1969, the Secretary General of the United Nations stated his conviction, based on information available to his office, that the world has 10 years left before its problems reach staggering proportions beyond our ability to control. Billy Graham says it appears that hordes of demons of violence have been loosed in this country and he sees this violence leading the USA rapidly into dictatorship. Dr. Raymond Ewall, former advisor to India's government, says the world is on the threshold of the biggest famine in history, first in India, Pakistan and China about 1970, then soon after in Brazil, Egypt, Indochina and Turkey. Dr. M. S. Livingston, MIT, President of the Federation of American Scientists, says it is unlikely that the world will avoid a nuclear holocaust, if another 15 years pass without arms control. Dr. W. G. Pollard, physicist, Director of Oak Ridge Associated Universities (an organization formed to make use of the advanced scientific facilities there) sees relatively close at hand critical shortages of fresh water, petroleum, gas, copper, tin, iron ore, chromium and manganese. He sees run-away inflation causing an automobile to cost an average man's income for 3 years and its operation costing one-fourth of that man's annual income. He sees the average family being unable to afford even an automatic washing machine or a home freezer within 10-20 years. He also sees a near-term limitation of thermal pollution on the expansion of power. Scientists at the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center say that in 1980, in one metropolitan area somewhere in the US, 10,000 persons will die from a cloud of air pollution. They say that in 10 to 15 years every individual in the hemisphere will have to wear a breathing helmet to survive outdoors. Most animal and plant life (food) will be killed off. They say they can see no solution at all; they see no improvement,

only degradation ahead for our entire environment. Paul and William Paddock, with an impressive background of service to many governments, write of famine by 1975, unprecedented in magnitude, facing the world and especially the under-developed nations. They see those few nations with food supplies being forced to decide which people will starve to death and which will receive a temporary stay from that fate, because there will not be enough food to distribute. They write that there is no way now to prevent tens of millions from starving to death. It becomes increasingly clear that, as the next doubling of the population rapidly progresses, each person will be able to lay claim to less than half, on the average, of what he now claims for his pleasure and well being.

All the crises are compounding. Nuclear war is a big threat, for there are enough weapons now in being to wipe out civilization. Air, water and land pollution is bringing on a destruction of food and resources for food, which will generate tension between those who have not and those who have some. There is fiscal inflation among peoples, and governments unwilling or unable to deal with it. The governments of nations and of states within nations are increasingly unable to efficiently handle the increasing loads placed upon them by the compounding of crises. All these factors bring on intolerable tensions and rebellion within countries, lead toward war for acquisition between countries and also open the way for disease. It seems so obvious that there is now not enough time, not enough money and not enough capable people to even keep up with the problems. So dictatorship after dictatorship will come into being to repress the rising up of the have-nots, and that repression will lead to greater rebellion and greater repression amid an accelerating regression in capability to supply needs and to provide any semblance of stability.

In a highly intelligent and well presented article, Dr. John Platt, University of Michigan and Salk Institute, writes on the great historical transition to new levels of technological power all over the world, its difficulties and the prognostication for its success. He says the trouble is that we may not survive these next few years. Unless we can harness and direct these tremendous new forces through the dangerous transition period, the rapidly increasing strains and crises of the next decade may kill all of us; they will make the last 20 years look like a peaceful interlude. Several types of crisis may reach the point of explosion in the next 10 years: nuclear escalation, famine, participatory crises, (of industry, civil, student, shoppers, the poor, etc.), racial crises, and the crisis of refusal to recognize the legitimacy of established administrations. A few years ago Leo Szilard placed the probable 50% chance of survival for the human race with respect to nuclear escalation alone as being between 10 and 20 years. Every year or two there is a confrontation between nuclear powers (Korea, Laos, Berlin, Suez,

Quemoy, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Israel, etc.) and it is easy to see that 5 or 10 more such confrontations in this game of 'nuclear roulette' might indeed give us only a 50-50 chance of living until 1980 or 1990. Many agricultural experts also think the great famines will begin within this next decade, with deaths that may reach 100 million people in densely populated countries like India and China. Others think the new grains and agricultural methods may now be able to keep the food supply ahead of the population growth, but still others think the re-education of farmers and consumers to use the new grains cannot proceed fast enough to make a difference. If famine does come, it will be catastrophic. Besides the direct human suffering, it will further increase international instabilities, with food riots, troops called out, governments falling, and international interventions that will change the world's political map. In addition, the next decade is likely to see continued crises of legitimacy of our overloaded administrations, from universities and unions to cities and national governments. In a nuclear crisis or in any of our other crises today, administrators or negotiators may often work out some basis of agreement between conflicting groups or nations, only to find themselves rejected by their people on one or both sides, who are then left with no mechanism except to escalate their battles further. What finally makes all of our crises still more dangerous is that they are now coming on top of each other. What administrations are not prepared to deal with are multiple crises, a crisis of crises all at one time. Dr. Platt thinks this multiplication of domestic and international crises today will shorten the period of a 50-50 chance for survival to more like 5 to 10 years. He is saying we may have even less than a 50% chance of living until 1980. Anyone who feels more hopeful about getting past the nightmares of the 1970's has only to look beyond them to the monsters of pollution and population rising up in the 1980's. We are in the gravest danger of destroying our society, our world, and ourselves in any of a number of different ways well before the end of this century.

So much then for an outline of what man sees ahead for himself and for 'his' world.

THE TIMES FROM GOD'S VIEWPOINT

Now let us look at a few of the things Holy Scripture has to say prophetically about the time we are in. Jesus told His disciples that for those outside everything becomes a parable, but to the followers of Christ will be entrusted the secrets (Mark 4:11). The Old Testament contains much of this forward looking prophecy, so we will examine a few of the passages relating to our subject (2Tim.3:16, ICor.10:11).

Ex.12:3-6. For an understanding of the time period before Christ, we should note that the lamb (a type of Christ) was set apart on the 10th day and then sacrificed on the 14th day. At Adam's fall, the Lamb (Christ) was needed or marked out in God's plan and then there was a waiting period of 4000 years up to the

time of Jesus Christ's death on the Cross, for to the Lord 1000 years is as a day (2Pet.3:8).

Joshua 6:1-16. Jericho is a type for the enemy of Jesus Christ and Joshua is a type of Christ. For 6 days the city of Jericho was encompassed, but not until early on the 7th day (Josh.6:15) was the city taken by the blowing of the trumpets and the shout of victory. This is a type of the fall of Satan's stronghold in this world at the beginning of the 7th 'day', which is known in Scripture as the Day of the Lord, or the Millenium (1000 years) of peace and righteousness on earth. From Ex.12:3-6, we know that 4000 years of the cycle of 7 'days' was fulfilled before Christ, so we know there must be 2 more 'days', or 2000 years, required to fill out man's work week of 6 'days', or 6000 years, before the millenial sabbath (rest) or Day of the Lord can begin. In that 7th 'day', man shall cease from his own works conceived in his perverted mind and in that 7th 'day', God takes over.

Joshua 3:4. The Ark of Testimony was a type of Christ, and there was to be a space of about 2000 units between the Ark and the people who followed. Those people who have been prepared are to follow (in time) about 2000 years after Christ (the Ark) had crossed over into the Kingdom, when they also are to cross over into the Kingdom, as He did.

Ex.19:1-20. This chapter displays a type of the new Covenant through Christ. The people were to be sanctified by Moses (a type of Christ) for 2 days (today and tomorrow) and then the people were to be ready for the Lord's coming down on the 3rd day (19:16-20), - a type of the 2nd coming of Christ. Here again is shown about 2 days (2000) years from the confirming of the New Covenant by the blood of Christ until He returns.

Hosea 5:15 . I (Christ) will return to My place on high until they repent and seek My face and require Me. Hosea 6:2. After 2 days the Lord (Christ) will revive us, quicken us, give us life; on the 3rd day He will raise us up that we may live before Him (raised into His glory in His heavenly Kingdom). :3 His going forth is certain as the dawn; He will come as the latter rain (which matures the fruit harvest). Taken in context, the fulfillment must be in our time. The time spoken of here extends from the time Jesus returned to His place on high after the resurrection until He will raise up those who are sufficiently prepared, a period of 2 'days', and 2 'days' is about 2000 years.

The New Testament also contains forward viewing prophecy in relevant pictures.

Luke 13:32. In this context, Jesus could not have been speaking of literal days when He said He would be driving out demons and performing healings today and tomorrow, and on the 3rd day complete His course. This was spoken some time before His ministry ended, and there is no indication His course was completed (perfected) on the literal 3rd day after He spoke these words. So the 'today and tomorrow' refers to the 2 days or 2000 years, during which He has been doing such works by the power of His Spirit through chosen ministries. On the 3rd day now beginning to dawn, His course shall be made complete (perfected) by

those of His Body (His called out Church) who come into maturity (perfection) and by the joining to Glory of the Head (Christ) and the mature portion of that Body, the prepared Church.

John 2:1. On the 3rd day, there was a wedding, and the Bible elsewhere foretells of the Bride being joined to her Husband and the wedding guests assembled. Jesus chose this event as a type by which He would manifest His glory (2:11). At the time of the wedding, by the washing and filling from the water of the Word and the Spirit (2:7), the earthen vessel of man is changed to contain imperishable 'wine', the good wine being saved until the last (2:9-10). After 2 'days', or about 2000 years, and at the beginning of the 3rd 'day', there is to be the wedding at which that fully prepared portion of the Body of Christ, the Bride, is joined to her Husband, Christ, followed by the wedding supper.

John 4:40-43. Jesus left Judea and the Jews who had rejected Him and then stayed 2 days in the city of Samaria. The word 'Samaria' means watchtower or look-out tower and is a type of the heaven world where Jesus has remained for 2 'days' (2000 years) after being rejected and crucified by those of His own nation. On the 3rd day, He returned to Galilee (John 4:3-4, 43-44). The word 'Galilee' means a circle and refers to the circuitous area of the whole world (Isa.40:22), and Scripture also speaks of Galilee of the <u>nations</u> (Isa.9:1, Matt.4:15). Here again is the consistent pattern of about 2000 years and then, on the morning of the 3rd millenium after Christ, He will return.

However, the coming of the new day in Jewish reckoning began when darkness fell; during the Roman occupation, there were the 4 night watches from 6 pm to 6 am which started the new day, and it was only during the 4th watch that the light of the new day really began to show. In other words, the visible coming on of the new day is progressive; there is a withdrawing of the darkness at the same time as a coming on of the new light. Our further study will provide confirmation that we are now beginning the entrance into the 3rd day (the Day of the Lord, the 1000 years of peace and righteousness), but the evidence of the closing darkness of the 2nd day are still very much present. For better understanding, we should also see that the 2 'days' (2000 years) are not necessarily reckoned <u>only</u> on the basis of our 365 day solar year. There is also a reckoning on a lunar year, and the Lord's perfect time may be reckoned according to the earth's original sin-free orbit of 360 days a year, both of which would result in a shortening of time for fulfillment of 2000 years as compared to the solar year reckoning. Although the 2000 solar years do not end until 2000 AD, there is a different ending according to the lunar calendar. Every new moon called for the blowing of trumpets and the Book of Revelation declares there is to be a blowing of the Trumpets to announce the new period. The 2000 lunar years (354.3 days per year) were completed <u>about</u> 1940 AD, and it was then the Trumpets of Revelation <u>began</u> to be fulfilled, as we shall see when we get to that portion of our study. However, the reckoning of the 2000 year period of 360 days a

year is completed about 1971 AD. From this we can see a gradual inception of the 3rd day, but on any basis we can see that the 3rd day's arrival is to be within our contemporary generation.

In recorded history, something special apparently occurs every 1000 years in God's plan. Adam began the cycle about 4000 BC, Enoch was translated without seeing death about 3000 BC, Abram was set apart about 2000 BC to become father of a new nation and of nations, the preparation of David for the building of the glorious Temple by Solomon occurred about 1000 BC, and Christ was born about 1 AD: The Church officially split and the world peoples became the modern nations we know today about 1000 AD, and the new Millenial Age of Christ's Kingdom on earth is promised about 2000 AD. Between the birth of a new man, Adam, to the birth of a new nation in Abram were about 2000 years, during which God worked with individuals. From Abram to Christ were 2000 years, a period during which God worked with nations. Jesus Christ brought to birth the Body of Christ among all nations, a super-race so to speak, and there is a period of 2000 years until that Body of chosen people from all nations will possess the world so that God can work then with the world as a whole.

In many portions of Scripture there is an apparent division of the whole quantity into components of 2/3 and 1/3, and so it is with the first 6 'days' of man's work week which then ends in the 7th 'day' of rest (Heb.4:9-11). The 6000 years from Adam to the new Age just ahead of us is divided into the 2/3 part from Adam to Christ (4000 years), the first man of a new race to the first Man of a new race, and into the 1/3 part from Christ to the inauguration of His Kingdom of Righteousness on earth, the presentation of the King to the full reign of the King over the whole of His Kingdom.

There are also several periods of 430 years cited in Scripture for our guidance. The period of 430 years has spanned that time from the giving of a covenant to the time which brings the beginning of freedom from a system of bondage through the application of a new contract. Abram was called out as a liberator and 430 years later God presented a new agreement to Israel, a nation, at Sinai. Moses was called out as a liberator and 430 years later, David was given new promises. David was called out as a liberator and 430 years later, God announced His plan involving all nations through Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the prophecies of Daniel. Nehemiah was called out as a liberator and 430 years later, God presented a new agreement through Jesus Christ for individuals in a Body among all nations. About 590 BC, Ezekiel prophecied about another 430 years (Ezek.4:5-6), in the Old Testament equivalent to the New Testament Book of Revelation. This 430 years has seen a partial fulfillment in Jesus Christ, but looks forward into the conclusion of the Church Age as well. Luther was called out to be a liberator (1520-25 AD) and 430 years later, God has opened up another agreement leading toward <u>full</u> deliverance for spirit, soul and <u>body</u> and into reigning with Him over all the earth. In lunar timekeeping, associa-

ted with trumpet blowing in Jewish history, this 430 year period is concluded when the Revelation Trumpets began to announce the entering of the new Age and the fading out of the old Age (about 1940). On perfect time, this 430 year period is concluded in about 1948, when the nation of Israel was re-born, a nation always closely associated with the working of the Lord's plans. In solar time, this 430 years extended into a new revival of the Holy Spirit's work in about 1954, which will not be damped out.

Jesus told His disciples about two signs which would indicate the coming in of the New Age and the fading out of the Church age, and both of these two signs have taken place in the 1940-1948 period. He spoke of the fig tree (always a symbol for the nation of Israel) coming into bud and leaf again, and the nation of Israel did in May, 1948 (Luke 21:29-31). He also spoke of the powers of the heavens being disrupted and shaken, and this was first demonstrated in July, 1945, when the results of man's disruption or re-orientation of the natural energy relationship within the atom was applied for destructive purposes by the detonation of the atom bomb (Lk.21:26). Jesus also said that when all these things taken together <u>begin</u> to occur (21:28), the generation then living shall not pass away until <u>all</u> has taken place and been completed (21:32). How many years are there in a generation? In the wilderness journey just prior to a crossing over into a promised land, it took somewhat <u>less</u> than 40 years for that generation to pass away, but Jesus said the generation at the time these things begin to occur shall <u>not</u> have passed away before the Age is completed. The discovery of how to disrupt the relationships within the atom for application in the fission bomb took place in the 1939-1945 period and, 30 years later, we are again at another juncture in time at which those who have become prepared by meeting all of God's requirements are to cross over into a promised land to become <u>manifested</u> as sons of God (Ro. 8:19). These two signs also point to the latter half of the 1970-1980 decade for the phasing out of the Church Age.

Many things are happening in the Bible lands pointing to the near return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and things in the world also, but there are in addition what might be considered awesome signs in outer space which seem to point to the belief that one great age is ending and another beginning. While we are not to give our attention to astrology, which is calculated to lead men into placing their dependence elsewhere than on God and is an abomination to Him, there is such a thing as heavenly astronomy which has to do with the study of the heavenly bodies and the signs, seasons, days and years (Gen.1:14) and the way in which they denote the wonderful plans and arrangements of God (Psalms 19:1-4). Nearly 2000 years ago, the 'wise men' in the East gave attention to the placement of a light and its position in the heavens, and were prepared to recognize the time for Christ's coming. The relative positions of the sun and moon and other of the planets and stars are used to indicate the appropriate times for special activity in Scripture. For example, trumpets were blown

at the time of the new moon. Passover was celebrated at the full moon, etc. The several portions of the heavens are also arranged in star patterns which can be used as indicators of times of greater importance. In ancient times, Saturn became identified as the 'star' of the prince or ruler of the world. In December, 1977, this planet moves into the zodiacal sign of Virgo, a sign in the heavens specially connected with events affecting God's chosen people. How very awesome and challenging to note that this event also takes place within the 1970-1980 decade. The Chaldeans were astronomers and astrologers of note and their name for Saturn was STUR (pronounce Satūr). The Chaldean language used the letters for numbers as well as for writing words and the total value of the letters (60-400-6-200) in this word makes it one of the many words whose number sum is 666, an association in this case of more than passing interest when we come to the study of 2Thess.2.

Since the Lord is the same yesterday, today and always, He uses the same patterns again and again in what He does. What are some of these which may be associated with the dawning of the new day? Jesus said, "I am the root and the offspring of David"; He also said, "I am the bright and morning star" (Rev.22:16), revealing two descriptive titles having to do with His first and His second comings respectively. When Jesus came to earth the first time, He became the root and the offspring of David from the moment He was born as a babe in Bethlehem. His birth then is a starting point which may be compared or contrasted with a starting point for His second coming. But following His birth, there was an inception and preparation period of 30 years before He <u>suddenly</u> <u>came</u> to His temple for its cleansing (Mal.3:1). At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus cleansed the physical temple at Jerusalem (John 2:13-17), but this act was symbolic of the fact that the cleansing of His temple-nation of the Jews had then begun. Subsequently, His entire ministry of 3-1/2 years was given to that cleansing, the driving out of literally 1000's of evil spirits from the people and the land. People by the 1000's were set free from possessing, oppressing, vexing and afflicting spirits, with the healing of all kinds of sicknesses, diseases and infirmities (Matt.4:23-24, 8:16, 10:1, 8). However, the religious leaders turned the people against Jesus and He was rejected and crucified. Jesus foresaw this and prophecied the consequences in parable form (Matt.12:43-45). The picture presented was the man delivered from an unclean spirit, but not receiving anything positive to fill its place. The spirit returned with 7 other spirits worse than itself, all entered the man, and his last state was worse than the first. Jesus then gave the application by saying, "So shall it be with this wicked generation". The spirits Jesus had driven from the land returned, bringing hosts of others with them, and in the subsequent years the state or condition of the Jews became increasingly worse, until their temple and nation were completely destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD; those not killed were scattered throughout the gentile nations.

If Jesus was the root and the offspring of David at His first coming, then Jesus as the bright and morning star refers

to His coming again, following the night (as the morning star does) of spiritual darkness which indicated would descend upon the world (John 9:4). Since the Lord does choose to use His patterns repetitively, should we not expect the pattern of His first coming to repeat with an inception and preparation period before He again suddenly comes to His temple? The very symbolism of the morning star seems to show this, for the morning star is seen shining in the eastern sky as a new day begins to dawn, preceding the actual sunrise. So Peter writes, "We have the prophetic word made firmer still to which you will do well to pay close attention as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the day or morning star rises in your hearts (2Pet.1:19). The day of the Lord of which Peter wrote is now dawning and the day star (Christ) is now rising in a new and in a living way in many hearts. We are now in the time of preparation leading up to His sudden coming to His temple again - this time to cleanse it for good.

When was the beginning of the end time period of inception and preparation when the morning star began to rise? When Jesus came the first time and was born as the root and offspring of David, a star appeared as a sign (Matt.2:1-2), and about 30 years later He began His ministry (Lk. 3:23). Should we not then expect that God would give another sign in this end time to indicate the inception period of the bright and morning star? Consider this: after almost 2000 years without a homeland, the Jews declared themselves a re-born nation in 1948 and the star of David began to flutter over the land of Palestine. This was the ensign mentioned by Isaiah (Isa.11:9-12) which would be set up by God for the assembling of the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah. Jesus said that the shooting forth of the fig tree (a symbol or type for the Jewish people - Hos.9:10) would be a sign of the nearness of His coming and Kingdom - so near that the generation living at the time of the sign would not pass away before all would be fulfilled (Lk.21:29-32). A generation is usually considered to be about 30 years, the same length of time between Jesus' birth and His coming to His temple. I am not trying to set dates, but only pointing out the parallel which seems to be more than a coincidence, and pointing up several relationships which strongly indicate the proximity of the end of the Church Age (2Pet.3, IThess.5:1-9, Amos 3:7).

The inception period is also a preparation period and, when we see the significance of the 1948 birth of the Jewish nation and the raising of the ensign of the star of David as related to the morning star period, we can also point to confirming evidence that in the late 40's a moving of the Holy Spirit began in a number of places. And in the same period of time the Lord began to raise up a number of men in a type of deliverance ministry of evangelism and healing that has reached world-wide. Then in the late 50's and through the 60's, large numbers of people in all denominations reached out for the Holy Spirit's fulness and have come to know Christ in a new, a living way. The fact that much which was begun in the Spirit is now being perpetuated

by the flesh (Gal.3:3) only points up the need for each one of us to examine ourselves on aims, motives, methods, etc., for we are living in a time of great testing and sifting. The Lord is preparing vessels to be completely emptied of self, sanctified by His Spirit and fit for the Master's use (2Tim.2:21), by being increasingly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Ro. 8:29).

Then what will take place when Jesus again suddenly comes to His temple, following the preparation period? He said that those who look for Him must be ready and must be awake, alert and watching (Lk.12:37), but to those not ready and watching, even among His household of the Church, He will come as a thief in the night (:39-40). One who comes as a thief comes to take something away, and the only evidence the unwatchful, dozing householder has of the thief having been there is that something of value is missing. The Lord also says of those who consistently reverence Him and talk to one another about Him and think of His character and influence (not all Christians do this consistently) that they are His peculiar treasure, His jewels (Mal.3:16-17).

In His letter to the Church at Thyatira, Jesus mentions His coming again, giving certain promises to those who are by then overcomers, and He pledges Himself as the morning star to them (Rev.2:25-28). The pledge is the promissory betrothal from the Bridegroom to the Bride company during this time of preparation. The period of the morning star is the time for the overcomers of the Bride company to make themselves ready (Matt.25:10, Rev.19:7). Jesus said, "You also must be ready; otherwise the Son of Man comes at an hour when you don't anticipate Him" (Lk.12:40). He also warns, "Take heed to yourselves, lest.....that day come upon you suddenly, like a trap or noose, for this snare will come upon all who live on the face of the earth" (Lk.21:34-35). The word for snare here indicates a net or small rope used to trap birds or small animals. In the Old Testament, the name Rebekah means rope or a noose, as a maiden who ensnares by her beauty, - which Isaac was. Jesus was ensnared into death because of His love for the Church (Eph.5:25), but in this end time, the snare or trap which is suddenly to come upon the world unawares is Christ's taking of His jewels, His Bride company, as symbolized by Isaac (a type of Christ) taking Rebekah to be his bride (Gen.24:67). It is also symbolized in the 'catching up' of the man-child group of matured, spirit-prepared ones (Rev.12:5), who are then seen as the 144,000 group of firstfruits in heaven (Rev.14:1-4). The dawning period of the morning star will be completed when the Lord suddenly comes to His temple to take His Bride company. The consummation of the time of betrothal and preparation then makes possible a further coming to His temple by the Lord, for the sunrise always follows the dawn. Should we not expect the Sun, the Son, of righteousness to arise with healing in His wings, the extension of Himself (Mal.4:2)? This further coming and arising, after taking out His jewels from the household of the Church, speaks of the great 'latter rain' outpouring and revival which will take place shortly after the

Bride is taken. After a time of waiting in the 'upper room', those of the remaining Church, who have humbled themselves in a time of continuous prayer and seeking the Lord, are to experience the sudden coming of the Holy Spirit in a 2nd Pentecost, more far-reaching than in Acts 2:2, to empower the Church for its Tribulation ministry and to also prepare a great multitude (Rev.7:9) to meet the Lord in the air at His coming at the close of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:29-30, IThess.4:13-17). The fulness of God's purpose through His Church in this end time will not come until He has shocked the Church world to its knees through the bodily translation and glorification of the first-fruits Bride company (Rev.14: 1-4). This will constitute His sudden coming to His temple and the beginning of the 3-1/2 years of cleansing during the Tribulation. He will cleanse both the temple of His Church, throughout Christendom, and the temple-nation of the Jews (Mal. 3:1-3). This prophecy through Malachi had an initial application in Christ's first coming and a partial fulfillment, but the complete fulfillment of the covenant of peace (Mal.2:5) will be experienced with His second coming. The prophecy also has an application to the present moment, for it is <u>now</u>, in this day of preparation, that a 'remnant' is being cleansed and purged. God is moving by His Spirit today. Now is our day of preparation and, for those who will not limit the Holy One of Israel, it can be a time of increasing blessing and power, ever going from glory to glory (2Cor.3:18), as the day star rises in the heart (2Pet. 1:18-19). Now is the New Day dawning. The outworking of God's plan is ever progressive, but we are not to become so absorbed in the future that we miss what He has for us today. He is the God of the Now, the I AM (Ex. 3:14).

How mighty and awesome are the events on the near horizon in this day in which we are living! Seemingly insurmountable problems beset the human race, problems of a scope and complexity such as the world has never seen and for which man has <u>no</u> resolution that will come even close to being the answer. We can, as many will, bury our heads in the sand and hope the troubles will go away, but the inexorable march of history will eventually catch up with those who do. Is there not a God, a mighty and loving Creator, who has planned and programmed the coming impasse so that those He loves might have the opportunity to see His mighty hand of deliverance from a system which already has the mark of death on it? Through these developments, are not multitudes being ushered into the valley of decision so that they might have the opportunity to know the living Christ and receive Life forevermore (Joel 3:14-16)?

There is an almost too obvious concentration of indicators all pointing at the 1970-80 decade, and more specifically at the last portion of it, as the most important time in millions of years of God's planning. Even those few years during which God Almighty personally taught His disciples in Palestine and then gave His life for them were preparatory for this coming decade. Without question, the darkest time mankind has ever

seen will soon be here, bringing intensified wickedness, rebellion and oppression, but, for those willing to become fully prepared in the Lord's pattern, it will be a time more full of light, cooperative enabling and power, protection and joyful anticipation than mankind has ever experienced. To be fearful or at peace will be totally the result of individual choice on the question of becoming fully prepared on our Lord's time schedule.

But before leaving the subject of the time-table in Scripture and the signs and indicators now being seen both on earth and in space, let us be aware of the real danger that sincere believers, as well as others, may become so engrossed in watching for the <u>signs</u> of Christ's coming as to remain completely unprepared for Him, - or even miss Him altogether. It seems almost incredible, but it is fact that the religious and Bible students of 1900 years ago were all expecting the coming of the Messiah, were studying all the prophecies about His coming and had all the details at their finger-tips. Nevertheless, they so misinterpreted the meaning of the Scriptures upon which they concentrated that, when the Messiah arrived, scarcely any of them were able to accept the fact that He really had come. The mode of His coming was so different from that which their interpretations of the prophecies had led them to expect, they could not adjust their concepts to fit in with the glorious plan God Himself designed at the beginning and personally came to implement. Are not all the patterns given in Scripture for our instruction (2Tim.3:16), and is not a similar lack of preparation and a missing of His second coming grievously possible for the religious leaders and Bible students through their erection of man's interpretation of God's plan as revealed in Scripture (2Pet.1:20-21)? Jesus spoke as though this is just what will happen when He returns. There will be Christians earnestly watching for the signs of His coming, even joyfully expecting to be caught up to join Him in the air, yet they will be so unready for His coming that, just as ordinarily irreligious people, they will be unable to participate in it.

What is required of those who decide to be made ready, regardless of what it costs? Jesus said they must be <u>doing</u> the will and commandments of their Lord (Lk.12:35-48). As preparation, He is pointedly suggesting that we here and now, while waiting for His coming, live according to the laws and the <u>minimum</u> standard of the Kingdom of heaven which He taught in the Sermon on the Mount and which He demonstrated so faithfully and gloriously in His own life and reactions to everything that happened to Him, His intention is that we copy Him (Ro.8:29, Eph.5:1), live as He lived (IJohn 2:5-6), and be righteous as He is (IJohn 3:6-7), - for the <u>righteous</u> are barely saved (IPet.4:17-18). Jesus Christ requires in those who would then join Him that they have already become without spot or wrinkle, holy and faultless (Phil.2:13-15, Eph.5:27, 2Pet. 3:14). This goal no man can reach on his own, so it is hopeless without both a supernatural enabling and a consistent following through in the application of that enabling by the recipient. We must become very much aware of the signs and

indicators, but we must know their place in God's larger plan so that we can accurately respond to His requirements. The study we are now undertaking is to lead into an understanding of the practice of the pattern God designed for us so that each one who cares enough can then become prepared, and be prepared on schedule.

THE GRAND PLAN

God's plan for those who love Him (those willing and eager to obey His commandments - John 14:21, 2John 6) goes far beyond this life and this Age, even beyond the accumulation of as many Ages as can be visualized, far beyond and above the Millenium Age of peace and righteousness over all the earth. The immediate stage of the fulfillment of God's plan is His work with the Body of Christ to regain all that Adam lost, and then to enable progress so far beyond as to make Adam's standing in God's very presence seem as only a beginning.

God's intention for mankind is that of reflecting Himself, <u>all</u> His power, knowledge, wisdom, accomplishment and love, for that reflection is to be a very large one to show the fulness and completeness of Himself (Gen.1:27-28). Mankind operating within God's plan is intended to subdue the whole earth, in the sense of developing the planet and all that is upon it after wresting it from the evil forces of Satan, while reflecting God, and, therefore, man must reach the stature necessary to exercise authority and dominion over the earth, administering God's plan in a reflection of Him. To reach this stature, man is intended to eat of the Tree of Life so that Christ (the Tree of Life) might be integrated into man and so that Christ might be reflected through him (Gen.2:16-17, Eph.4:10). But man took a detour off the high way of God's plan, (Gen.3:22-24), so God first intends to bring man back to that High Way in a restoration of man to His ongoing plan (Gen.3:14-15). First there must be a subduing of the 'world' within man, the microcosm of the 'birds of the air' (thoughts), the 'fish of the sea' (desires and emotions) and the 'animals' (the carnal drives, native talents and avarice), and then a development of a new nature (Gen.1:26).

The restoration of man's progress toward the attainment of God's purposes is exclusively through the corporate Body of Christ, and therefore He gifts that Body with training ministries which are to build it up. By the building process, the Body of Christ is to be brought to maturity (perfection) and is to become fully equipped (Eph. 4:11-12) to reflect God's complete likeness so as to bring the whole of the earth (microcosm first and then macrocosm) within His plan, and to administer that plan over all the earth. Therefore, it is God's intention that the Body of Christ attain an absolute unity in faith (His faith <u>and</u> active response to that faith when it is given - Eph.4:5, Heb.11:1-8), and a full comprehension and an accurate knowledge of Jesus Christ in order to become fully matured, which maturity is nothing less than the standard that is Christ's own completeness (perfection). The Body of Christ is to <u>quickly</u> reach that measure of the fulness of Christ and the completeness found in Him (Eph.4:13),

because there are now only a few, very few, years before He brings this Church Age to its conclusion. Without such maturity, the members of the Body will be tossed to and fro by the deceits of men who play the game with 'loaded dice' (Eph.4:14, Matt.24:24). There are to be no casual Christians indefinitely in the Lord's plan (Matt.12:33, Rev.3:16). The equipping of the Body with the gifts of ministries is for the purpose of establishing an army, perfectly trained for the Lord's use. The <u>minimum</u> requirement for spiritual maturity is that of reaching Christ's full stature and this is confirmed by the fact that only the use of the full power of God's Holy Spirit in the man Jesus Christ proved sufficient to overcome the strong and wiley Satan.

The Bible states that God entrusted this world and its atmospheric envelop in stewardship to Lucifer (Satan) while that mighty being was still found to be perfect (ICor.10:26, John 12:31, IJohn 5:19, Eph.2:2, Ezek. 28:12, 15). But since a steward must be found faithful (ICor.4:2) and Satan has been rebelling by destroying that with which he was entrusted (Isa.14:5-6, 12), God will reclaim that stewardship when Satan's rebellion has served in completing that part in God's plan for accelerating the maturing of a first portion of the Body of Christ to the standard of Christ's own completeness. Then the offspring of the woman (the true Church) will trample Satan and his followers (Gen.3:15, Rev.12:5-8) and, in fact, we may be those 'feet' who will trample him (Ro.16:20), if we will prepare. However, if we continue to use the ways Satan taught Adam, the reliance on God-excluding reasoning, desire, feelings and intellect, the reliance on natural strength and on physical and material resources, we will lose the contest just as quickly as Adam did. Satan is strong, supernaturally strong, so other weapons and other strategies are necessary. Again, from the viewpoint of the spiritual world, the issue is that of the destruction of the human race, for God's chosen weapon against Satan's rebellion is that remnant of utterly dedicated men which chooses to line up wholly with God. Since there will be no re-runs of the show-down with Satan, the army God will use <u>must</u> previously have received a complete and perfect training. To qualify for participation in this elite and elect force, one must have developed an unfailing loyalty and reliability (in any army an unreliable man is a hazard to everyone around him), a perfected response to obey in absolute faith (even without always understanding why), a skill in using the supernatural weapons with full effectiveness, and must have learned how to back-up, strengthen and preserve those others by his side in the Body of Christ army. This development can only take place during the actual practice of listening and obedience within and among those of the Body of Christ. Seek first His Kingdom <u>and His righteousness</u>, and all the other things will be added to you (Matt.6:33). These two things are first, the seeking of His government (Kingdom), His Lordship, through repentance that is deep and thorough down

inside, and the seeking of His righteousness in a continuous and faithful demonstration of righteous thought, attitude, purpose and response in the pattern Jesus Christ presented in His own life (IJohn 3:6-7, IPet.4:17-18, Ro.8:29), through obtaining and then persistently using the power of the Holy Spirit, just as He did. Nothing less will be adequate.

'Just believing', as so many traditional Christians use the phrase, brings nothing of itself. Only what the Lord places within the members of His army will be of any use in Body protection and in dispossessing the enemy; everything we can present to the Lord from our own physical inheritance is a drag. His impartations of empowerment, His gifts and ministries from the Spirit, the fruits of the Spirit, and God's full armor are absolutely necessary, - all of them -, within the corporate Body of Christ, just as Jesus had them. Without them the Body cannot stand in the final contest with Satan's hosts, and God has chosen no alternates, only this Body. Whether it is large or small, this Body will complete the job with His power, but only those fully prepared will be able to handle that much power, and only those will be useful and used. Other Christians will be turned back (Matt.7:21-27), as in Gideon's army in which 300 were employed out of 32,000 called, because most were first concerned about their own feelings and satisfactions. But that 300 did the job against a multitude like the sand (Judges 7:2-7, 12).

Those who are prepared shall do greater works than Jesus did, because He is now glorified (John 14:12). Who are the manifested sons (Ro.8:19-23), except those who have become prepared, for only in them is the completed heirship of adult adoption or placement which brings full exercise of all rights to that son. They alone are to be the primary instruments for setting the world free of decay and corruption by showing the way, a High Way; they alone will demonstrate as a firstfruits group a full redemption, even including that redemption of mortal bodies to deathless heavenly glory or earthly glory (IThess.5:23-24), before Christ returns personally.

THE SPECIFIC PLAN

Because of lack of understanding and lack of willingness to enter into and apply the empowerment necessary for subsequent service in the Lord's army, Christians in these concluding days of the Age are even now living far below their covenanted (contracted) rights.

Isaiah speaks directly to today's spiritual Israel (Gal. 3:29, Ro.2:28-29, 4:16), of which each man may be a part, - if he chooses, to leave the structure of limitations erected by man, (Babylon) all of it, and come into the Lord's provisioning (Isa.51:1-4, 12-16, 52:1-12, Jer. 50:4-9, Rev.18:2-5). Before the Kingdom of peace and righteousness can be established on earth, all that is in any way against God must be utterly swept away (Matt.22:44, Heb.12:26-29). All things must be swept clean so that every person remaining is sincerely seeking and welcoming His rule, and then will His Kingdom of righteousness begin. It

is His law that He will not force His will upon any person, but every person who asks from his heart has a clear chance to participate fully in active cooperation. Our loving and concerned Lord offers the potential of His complete protection, physical as well as spiritual (Ps. 91:2-13), for He is not willing that any should perish (2Pet.3:9). Therefore, all who do perish will do so by hastening the calamity upon themselves (Prov. 21:18), in spite of our Lord's provision, through wilful ignorance or knowing disobedience (2Thess.1:6-9). If we have the Book and don't read it, - that is wilful ignorance. If we know what pleases Him and don't do it, - that is knowing disobedience. If we read and see what He offers and don't take all He offers, that too is knowing disobedience, for He offers us no thing we do not need. Dare we presume that man's child-like evaluation of what is offered is more accurate than the Creator's?

The Bible is full of God's intention and His offer to build up a people in His likeness, not only as individuals, but specifically as a welded-together Body of persons having a unity of purpose, plan and objective within that Body which is in complete unity with His purpose, His plan and His objective. The result is to be a capability and a practice of reflecting an accurate likeness of Himself in the full stature of Jesus Christ here on earth (Eph.4:12-13), of accomplishing greater things than Jesus Christ accomplished while on earth in human flesh (John 14:12, IPet.2:9) and then of sitting with Him and co-ruling with Him over the whole earth (Rev.3:21). This progression is for all those who choose to exercise sufficient diligence in preparation, for there is only one way open for proceding toward God's objectives and reaching them. There is no other successful approach except through Jesus Christ, none except through the exquisitely precise patterns, and only those patterns, which He designed and recorded for us to follow (Rev.15:4). Therefore, each person needs to know what are His patterns, to separate those from man-devised patterns which might appear almost as good, and to steadfastly follow in those which He presents. To know them first requires the establishment of a relationship with Jesus as Lord so He then can have our permission to tell and expose us to what needs to be done as we search out His will. It requires the continuous ingesting and digesting of His instruction book, a continuous willingness toward and cooperation with His Holy Spirit as He seeks to impart training and leading, and requires a continuous two-way communication (prayer and listening); no element can be omitted in His plan. It is also a vital part of His plan that this preparing be done among others who are of like mind (Heb.10:24-25) so that Christ as the Head of the Body can utilize the 'hands' of the Body to clothe it and the 'feet' of the Body to support it, etc. (ICor.12:27). Under His rules, preparation cannot be accomplished 'solo'.

In order for there to be a building up in the Lord's design, there must first be a restoration to the beginning He requires, and many such pictures of restora-

tion are given in the Bible for our edification so we will not miss this last cycle of restoration in the Church Age. The apostles of Christ were moving in this pattern and were teaching others to do so, but even in that time of great light there was also a pervasive moving away from the Lord's design (2Thess.2:7), replacing it gradually with man's preferences, additions and subtractions, until the Church entered the 'Dark Ages' with almost no spiritual light. Partial restorations were brought about through such men as Luther, Wesley, Huss, Calvin, Darby, etc., but each attempt eventually was turned off into a 'parking lot' or 'detour' and fell short of full restoration. For contemporary application, Jesus requires a return to the Church's first love, placing Christ at the head again, instead of hierarchies of organization (Rev.2:1-7). First there must be a willingness in the members of the Body to allow Jesus to be Lord without interference from man's opinions or competition from man's 'good' works. First there must be a return to recognizing that our Lord did design a plan for establishing and building His Body and the members of His Body which needs no improving, no strengthening, no additions and no subtractions, a return to a willingness to accept that plan He designed and a return to a willingness to accept all that His plan offers to the members of His Body. He calls for a fervency of dedication (Ro.12:1) and for the possession of all He offers, because all of that is an absolute necessity (Rev.3:14-22). He says that living in man's religious patterns, the best of them (Matt.5:20), brings no lasting results, even from much application, and that God's house must be built from His materials and in His design, or the 'dew' and the 'produce' will be held back (Hag.1:4-11). First there must be a willingness to respond to all that is required for a completed foundation as described and offered by Jesus Christ and then by His apostles (Eph.2:20). Before there can be any worthy building, a completed and firm foundation must be in place (Matt.7:24-27), including an open and honest repentance before the Lord for both the past offences committed and the residuals of bitterness, etc., left in the heart by the actions of others toward us. Also included is that vitalizing impartation of Holy Spirit empowerment (Acts 1:8) which Jesus Christ called the baptism of the Holy Spirit, typically accomplished by what Scripture describes as the 'laying on of hands' (Acts 1:5, 8:17-18, 19:6, Heb.6:1-2). Subsequently, there must be a continuing personal application of that imparted empowerment to live the life of righteousness which our pattern, Jesus Christ, lived (Matt.6:33, IPet.2:21, 4:18). There must be that personal 'coming to know Him' (Phil.3:9-11) which is accompanied by maturing into the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph.4:13).

When a people do enter His purposes and His plan to reach His objectives, and are built together as living stones in His temple, the glory of that latter house or dwelling place will be far greater than the glory in the temple of Solomon and they will have peace and prosperity (Hag.

2:7-9); that matured temple will be a Body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself (Eph. 3:19). It is to the members of this uniquely designed Body who have thus made themselves ready that Jesus will return. Other Christians, not yet ready at the time, will miss His return until they have become willing to make themselves ready (Matt.7:21-23, Rev.19:7, 22:14). It is these who have prepared themselves through His enablement upon whom the 'latter rain' will fall in a pouring out of Holy Spirit empowerment such as the world has never seen (Joel 2:25-32, Acts 2:17-21), for only those who have become prepared will be capable of handling such great power and glory. It is these who have made themselves fully ready to whom Jesus will bring full salvation in a redemption of the whole of man, in spirit, soul and body (Heb. 9:28, IThess.5:23, Ro.8:23).

But the Lord also promises a great shaking out and shaking down of every organization and development which does not have Him as its designer and builder. Much of what man considers to be fine and good and surely pleasing to God will be shaken to pieces, along with all that is recognized to be of man's building. The Bible has several records of God's tumbling down and bringing to nothing what man has attained by working apart from God, and He tells of one more time when all things will be shaken in a final removal of everything not of God so that only that which is of His design and building will remain (Heb. 12:26-27, Ro.9:27-29, Isa.2:5-22, Rev.18:1-8). The need for preparation and building to withstand this shaking reaches beyond the initial acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord (Master) and beyond a subsequent experience with the Holy Spirit, for Scripture says the fully righteous are barely saved. Those prepared ones must possess a holiness without which no man will see the Lord (Heb.12:14), must be holy as He is holy (IPet. 1:15), must be righteous as He is righteous (IJohn 3:7), must show themselves without blemish in the midst of a crooked and wicked generation (Phil.2:15), and must be perfect (complete, mature) as their heavenly Father is perfect (Matt.5:48). Only the violent (for 'knowing' Christ) can storm the gates of heaven (Matt.11:12). The protection and enabling against the shaking out is according to the preparation: full preparation - full protection and enabling; some preparation - some protection and enabling; little preparation - little protection and enabling. Following is a sampling of promises for those who do prepare: John 16:14-15, Isa.11:1-9, Isa.64:1-4, Isa.65: 13-25, Luke 12:37, Luke 21:18-19, Ro.16:20, 19:20, Eph.4:12-13, Heb.4:9-11, Rev.2:7, 11, 17, 26, 28, Rev.3:5, 12, 21, Ps.91.

If we have read the signs and indicators correctly in the world around us and in the Scripture, there are yet a few years, but very few, until the wickedness of the evil spirits and the wickedness of man will be filled up and completed in that consummating battle between the forces of our God and the forces of Satan, our adversary. Ours is the generation, this is the time in which I am persuaded we

can begin to come into knowing the exact year and day of the beginning of great tribulation (Amos 3:7, Mk.4:22), that period of intolerable anguish which is coming upon all the earth (Matt.24:8, 21). Since Satan no longer has access to Jesus Christ Himself, having been overcome by Him (Lk.10:18-19), the battle will be of both a spiritual and physical nature against His Body of Christ on earth, and will climax in a world war of far greater intensity than that of the previous two world wars. Christians will progressively be finding it necessary to move into a preparation and protection, such preparation as many have thought is not really necessary once one 'has Jesus in his life and begins to love Him'. Satan and his hosts will see to it that the pressures from national and world governments and from a new extension of socialistic economics will drive people into submission to his plan through fear (Lk.21:26), and there will be overcoming deceits poured out on people, so subtle as to almost seduce the fully prepared saints (Matt.24:24).

What has our Lord told us is necessary to be able to withstand the flood of evil (Rev. 12:15) and the onslaught of hosts of demon spirits (Rev.9:1-3)? Before the world of this planet can be subdued for development in God's pattern, the inner world or microcosm within man must be subdued and brought into God's plan. Man's thoughts (birds in the air), desires, emotions (fish of the sea), carnal drives, native talents and avarice (beasts in the field) must first be brought under the dominion of the spirit, instead of evidencing soul dominion (Gen. 1:26). Jesus said we Christians are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength and all our mind, - our whole being (Lk. 10:27), and loving the Lord means obeying His commands (John 14:21). Again, it is written that the righteous barely receive completed salvation (IPet. 4:18); therefore, the first things in the necessary preparation for protection and victory are the willing acceptance of the kingly rule of Jesus Christ and the application of His imparted, super physical power for living in His righteousness, - conforming to His will in thought, attitude, purpose, and action (Matt.6:33). Jesus outlined His minimum requirements in the Sermon on the Mount, and His Word specifically tells Christians that each one must copy Jesus, becoming like Him (Ro.8:29, Eph.1:5, Lk.6:40), live as He lived (IJohn 2:6), become pure as He is (IJohn 3:3), become holy as He is (IPet.1:15-16), and become perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (Matt.5:48). It is written that qualifying Christians must become holy and faultless and without spot or wrinkle in His sight while yet in their physical bodies here on earth (Phil.2:15, Eph. 5:27). That requires some doing! That requires the application of power such as only Jesus Christ has offered. The first things are His rule and His righteousness. After the engaging of these first things comes the adding on of the other things which lead to full protection, the demonstration of complete victory, and the possession of full salvation. These requirements are for each Christian, because God does not

play favorites; - what He requires of one, He requires of all (Ro.2:11).

REPENTANCE

Because the near-term objective of full redemption and full protection cannot be reached before or without the beginning of the Lord's pattern, most of us are detained there again and again, until the first things are made firm and lasting. He cannot be ruler in any segment of our living which has not been specifically presented to Him for His action on it, nor can He be ruler if there is any unwillingness to respond to <u>whatever</u> He desires, in active cooperation, but unwillingness often does rise when the expression of His will differs from our own choice or desire or reason. He cannot truly be ruler (Lord) in all the areas of our life, unless a supernatural enabling has been received and is being used, for in his own strength and abilities man is utterly unable to consistently obey God's commands (ICor.12:3). The knowledge of this inadequacy was dramatically presented for our instruction in living drama by the Israelites, God's <u>chosen</u> people, who sincerely promised and intended to obey God's commands and who continuously were disobedient since Moses acquainted them with His requirements 1500 years before Christ. It was only through the personal ministry of Jesus Christ that a supernatural enabling was made available in a precisely described pattern (Acts 1:5, 8) to men of all nations for the express purpose of making the rulership of Christ possible and practical in the life of the individual Christian and in the whole Body of Christ. But, because of accepting the deceits of Satan, most men do not recognize even the potential of becoming totally and consistently obedient and so have not searched out and availed themselves of the miracle Jesus Christ made ready for application at the beginning portion of each Christian's born-again life. Instead, man ingests lies direct from hell. For example, we hear repetitively, 'God helps those who help themselves'; 'I'm only human'; 'no one is perfect'; 'you're a product of your environment'; 'you can't win'; 'if you can't beat them, join them'. But God says don't join them, beat 'em - with God's love!

The first things in God's pattern are the kingly rule of Jesus Christ <u>and</u> His righteousness (Matt.6:33). How does this statement of Jesus correlate elsewhere in Scripture with His first requirement of repentance (Matt.3:2, Mk.1:4, Acts 2:38)? Did you repent as you first came to Jesus? Did He forgive you as a result of that repentance? You answer with an affirmation that you did repent and that He did forgive, because Scripture declares that He took <u>all</u> sin and rebellion upon Himself (and sickness and pain also), when He died on the Cross (Isa.53:4-5, 12, Matt.8:17), - that is, all of those things that we do faithfully present to Him for His action. You probably have a fairly clear concept in your mind of what constitutes repentance. For most, I suppose, repentance means seeing something that does not appear righteous, and then becoming sorry about it, sometimes with tears, and then that

repentance should terminate with asking for and receiving God's forgiveness. How does this compare with the Bible picture of repentance, for example in Matt.21:28-32? In the context of the subject of repentance (21-25), Jesus told of two sons who were asked to work in the Father's 'vineyard'. One refused but then changed his mind and did so. There was a change of mind indicated, but there was not necessarily sorrow, tears, or even an effort to notify the Father of the change of intention in this case. The repentant son just began to work. The important thing in understanding this parable is seeing that the son put into action his intention to be obedient. Repentance cannot be true or full repentance without beginning to live out the change. Repentance sometimes may not incorporate being sorry as an emotional reaction; neither do tears make a true repentance, though both sorrow and tears <u>may</u> be involved. It is not true repentance until there is a walking in the new direction (Lk.3:7-8).

Does God require a once-for-all repentance only for non-believers on the point of turning to Christ? No, He requires true repentance of Christians also, immature and mature, every time there is need for it (ICor. 15:9, ITim.1:15, Rev.2:5, 16, 22, Rev.3:19). For Christians, true repentance is a thing of the past, it is to be in the present, and it <u>must</u> also be a thing of the future. Since our God is a righteous God and since He gave man a free will as a gift, He cannot thrust or force anything upon man which he will not ask for and willingly receive. Although He did provide for the taking of <u>all</u> sins of mankind upon Himself on the Cross, He cannot deal with any specific act or attitude of sin or rebellion to lift it from the individual man and include it in the 'all', unless that item of rebellion is willingly offered up to Him to be dealt with. So often we find there are one or more things we would sort of like to keep hold of, at least for a while longer, and there are a multitude of these things, specifically or by category, which we don't remember or recognize as needing to be submitted to Him. The rebellions that must be dealt with include overt acts or omissions, but rebellions also include the affects left in us by experiencing a wrong or suspected wrong from another. Resentment, vindictiveness, hatred, self-defending indignation, critical thoughts (even if not formed into words), jealousy, envy, bitterness, etc., are all trespasses against God's commands and in His sight they require repentance (an act of 'walking' in the other direction) and forgiveness so that our praying can be effective and our listening sensitive. Not reading the Bible enough requires repentance. Unbelief of God's Word requires repentance. No response to what God offers requires repentance. Not praying and not listening requires repentance. A lack of repentance requires repentance.

There is also the 'conditioning' that develops in our being from having lived in a pattern of rebellion over a period of weeks and months and perhaps years. Acts of rebellion may be repented of and dealt with, but a root may still remain, perhaps

of guilt or self-condemnation, perhaps of something else, which in many instances has been covered over in the subconscious and remains there as an invisible doorway through which the enemy gains access, or a trigger which he can spring to dump us into a pool of discouragement or dispair which effectively cuts off God's ministering to our need and forces us to move away from the constantly victorious and joyful life God provides. There are also things needing cancellation and erasing which do not originate within ourselves, things which are transmitted or which 'wipe off' from others with whom we have associated. You know that you can pick up a spirit of discouragement or frustration or even futility from just being with or talking with another person who is broadcasting these qualities, and so it is with many other types of impartations also.

Among the many events in our lives are things that cut and hurt our ego, and so many of these damaging results are carefully covered over so that they cannot show on the surface; they become buried in the subconscious, hidden but available to trigger unexpected and sometimes explosive reactions to relatively minor future experiences. Treating the symptoms brings a temporary benefit, but only cutting out the root eliminates the symptoms. However, our righteous Lord cannot unilaterally deal with something that has not been presented to Him for His action. Each of these things call for repentance.

Each of us, to minor or major degree, has engaged in self-deception through asking the Lord to forgive all our sins in general and then let the matter drop there. It is true He has made provision for the forgiveness of all our sins when we come in true repentance, but repentance is an active response in a new direction which can only be initiated after recognizing what it is that needs forgiveness. True repentance in the Scriptural pattern requires an act of walking away from something and of walking in the new something. How can we even think of separating or severing ourselves from a sinful thing, if we don't recognize that which we are to leave? In this view, there can be no thorough repentance for a sin, rebellion or trespass which is not known to our conscious minds. Therefore, God says to come and reason with Him (that the thing may become known) so that our sins can become white as snow (Isa.1:18). Therefore, He says we are to ask Him to search and know our hearts (Ps.139:23-24) so He can bring to our conscious recognition those things that have been submerged and covered over, whether they exist because of sin initiated by ourselves alone, whether they are the results of what others have done in wronging us, or whether they are from impartations received during physical contact (especially sinful physical contact) or social contact (especially breakbreaking bread together - ICor. 5:11). The Bible states that man's sorrow (introspection) is deadly, but that godly grief produces repentance (the turning from and the turning to) which leads to deliverance; in other words, the act of walking in the

new thing brings about the deliverance from the old thing. Let the wicked (any who has not been fully purified) forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon (Isa.55:7).

Thorough repentance is not accomplished in a few moments, an hour, a day, or often in weeks. By invitation, the Lord must search our inner being and progressively expose the rebellions hidden there, before they can be given to Him for eradication. It is a cooperative venture, His doing the searching while we are reviewing the periods of our life during which the things might have been hidden; not 'soul searching' to dig up all the garbage in our life for another review, for that can be devastating, but an eager and willing reception for knowing things forgotten and overlooked as the Holy Spirit brings them to the light of our minds. This process takes time for most people.

Now we can begin to see the association of true repentance with the righteousness which Christ requires. True repentance cannot be accomplished without beginning to walk in Christ's righteousness; the 'turning from' necessitates a 'turning to'. Also walking in Christ's righteousness cannot become fact until there has been the exercise of true repentance; in order for there to be the 'turning to', there must have been the'turning from' so that the result retains no mixture. Now it is also more easily seen that there must not only be the initial repentance in turning from the world system to God's rule, but there must then be the progressive repentance for Christians in which there is turning from specific trespasses and specific categories of trespasses and turning to the righteous walk to replace the old. Because this turning requires super-natural enabling, the Lord has provided the availability of that extra power at the beginning of the re-born life for all who desire to have it. That power is the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Ro.6:4) and is sufficient to deliver each person from the <u>compulsion</u> to sin, - to think bitter thoughts, to engage in jealousy, envy, criticism, resentment, coveting, etc. With this power in possession, that person may still rebel if he <u>chooses</u>, but he no longer is compelled to do so; he may thoroughly repent and turn completely to righteous living, if he wants to and if he remembers to use the supernatural empowering. Therefore, we are not to forsake assembling together, but should continue to warn and urge and encourage one another all the more faithfully as the Day of the Lord approaches (Heb.10:25). Each Christian <u>can</u> begin living in Christ's righteousness, - if he wishes to do so (IJohn 2:1). Each Christian should do so, for Christ's righteousness is a first thing to be established (Matt.6:33), inasmuch as the fully righteous are barely saved (IPet.4:18), - and then other things can be added.

If in the relatively mild spiritual conflict of this day, a Christian continues to be overcome, what will be his position

when the hordes of Satan converge upon him? If he continues to be overcome while the river of evil and destruction is fairly well contained between embankments, what will he do when the river overflows its banks in a flood (Jer.12:5, Rev.12:15)? Feelings of unworthiness and feelings of inadequacy (I just can't) which prevent our accomplishing God's plan are there because of lack of repentance. This preparation is vitally important and it must reach thoroughly and deeply into the heart; mental recognition is just not adequate. The Holy Spirit must be given lengthy opportunity to settle and deepen the past in our lives until there is no thing remaining that can throw us into a mood, or a withdrawal, or bitterness, or rebellion and cause us to turn off the things of the Lord. This is the only way to a changed life. The Holy Spirit must have full opportunity to enlighten our present so we can constantly be walking with Him. The Holy Spirit must also have full opportunity to direct our future into the way in which we ought to go. Without repentance in depth, there can be no consistency in being what the Lord wants us to be. The attainment of Christian maturity is impossible without repentance in depth, because first the hindrances need to be removed. Only after thorough repentance and dedication can the end-time out-pouring of the Holy Spirit be released to any individual (Joel 1 and 2).

Among His jobs, the Holy Spirit is to guide into all truth (John 16:13) and to illuminate the recognition of sin and of righteousness (John 16:8); therefore, we are to allow the Lord to reason with us (Isa.1:18) that we might depart from unrighteousness (2Tim.2:19) and be His servants (John 8:32-34). We are to invite Him to search our hearts and bring up any wicked thing (Ps.139:23-24) so that the wicked thing can be purged out and blotted out during thorough repentance (a change to walking righteously) and so that a clean heart is created and a right spirit is renewed (Ps.51:6-10). Only then can Jesus Christ exercise His full rule and only then can there be that consistent walk in His righteousness. After that, the other things He expects us to use in an effective reflection of Himself here on earth will be added. First the firm foundation for the house (power and ability to support the house) must be in place, then the frame of the house (His righteousness, - not ours) can be built upon that foundation. Only then and upon these first things can a worthy house be completed which will provide the peace and comfort of full protection from the 'elements' of the Tribulation and its rapidly mounting onslaught of enemy hosts and which will enable a triumphant emergence into the very presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PREPARATION

FOR

CHRIST'S COMING

a short period of time. Even so, new diseases never seen before and disquieting variants of more familiar diseases are appearing increasingly. In January, 1971, TV newscasting made mention of a warning being sent out to physicians that the world is on the verge of several wide-spread, epidemic plagues. It has been calculated that with the present pattern of automobile use, by 1990 the air in the USA will be so polluted that survival will be in question. With the projected growth in facilities for generating power, using present methods, all the oxygen generated by green plants will be consumed by combustion for power by 2030. The US population increased 11% during 1960-68, but crime increased 122% and the increase in crime continues at much higher rates. Earthquakes and volcano activity is anticipated almost any day which will adversely affect weather, agriculture, distribution of water and power, air contamination, etc. Destructive tsunamis, storms and floods of greater intensity are also expected. Just one year of bad weather would result in there being no food surplus in the USA and Canada. Rebellion of people is moving in the direction which, if continuously intensified as is the pattern, would engulf whole nations within just a few years; a few nations already are. In 1969, the Secretary General of the United Nations stated his conviction, based on information available to his office, that the world has 10 years left before its problems reach staggering proportions beyond our ability to control. Billy Graham says it appears that hordes of demons of violence have been loosed in this country and he sees this violence leading the USA rapidly into dictatorship. Dr. Raymond Ewall, former advisor to India's government, says the world is on the threshold of the biggest famine in history, first in India, Pakistan and China about 1970, then soon after in Brazil, Egypt, Indochina and Turkey. Dr. M. S. Livingston, MIT, President of the Federation of American Scientists, says it is unlikely that the world will avoid a nuclear holocaust, if another 15 years pass without arms control. Dr. W. G. Pollard, physicist, Director of Oak Ridge Associated Universities (an organization formed to make use of the advanced scientific facilities there) sees relatively close at hand critical shortages of fresh water, petroleum, gas, copper, tin, iron ore, chromium and manganese. He sees run-away inflation causing an automobile to cost an average man's income for 3 years and its operation costing one-fourth of that man's annual income. He sees the average family being unable to afford even an automatic washing machine or a home freezer within 10-20 years. He also sees a near-term limitation of thermal pollution on the expansion of power. Scientists at the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center say that in 1980, in one metropolitan area somewhere in the US, 10,000 persons will die from a cloud of air pollution. They say that in 10 to 15 years every individual in the hemisphere will have to wear a breathing helmet to survive outdoors. Most animal and plant life (food) will be killed off. They say they can see no solution at all; they see no improvement,

only degradation ahead for our entire environment. Paul and William Paddock, with an impressive background of service to many governments, write of famine by 1975, unprecedented in magnitude, facing the world and especially the under-developed nations. They see those few nations with food supplies being forced to decide which people will starve to death and which will receive a temporary stay from that fate, because there will not be enough food to distribute. They write that there is no way now to prevent tens of millions from starving to death. It becomes increasingly clear that, as the next doubling of the population rapidly progresses, each person will be able to lay claim to less than half, on the average, of what he now claims for his pleasure and well being.

All the crises are compounding. Nuclear war is a big threat, for there are enough weapons now in being to wipe out civilization. Air, water and land pollution is bringing on a destruction of food and resources for food, which will generate tension between those who have not and those who have some. There is fiscal inflation among peoples, and governments unwilling or unable to deal with it. The governments of nations and of states within nations are increasingly unable to efficiently handle the increasing loads placed upon them by the compounding of crises. All these factors bring on intolerable tensions and rebellion within countries, lead toward war for acquisition between countries and also open the way for disease. It seems so obvious that there is now not enough time, not enough money and not enough capable people to even keep up with the problems. So dictatorship after dictatorship will come into being to repress the rising up of the have-nots, and that repression will lead to greater rebellion and greater repression amid an accelerating regression in capability to supply needs and to provide any semblance of stability.

In a highly intelligent and well presented article, Dr. John Platt, University of Michigan and Salk Institute, writes on the great historical transition to new levels of technological power all over the world, its difficulties and the prognostication for its success. He says the trouble is that we may not survive these next few years. Unless we can harness and direct these tremendous new forces through the dangerous transition period, the rapidly increasing strains and crises of the next decade may kill all of us; they will make the last 20 years look like a peaceful interlude. Several types of crisis may reach the point of explosion in the next 10 years: nuclear escalation, famine, participatory crises, (of industry, civil, student, shoppers, the poor, etc.), racial crises, and the crisis of refusal to recognize the legitimacy of established administrations. A few years ago Leo Szilard placed the probable 50% chance of survival for the human race with respect to nuclear escalation alone as being between 10 and 20 years. Every year or two there is a confrontation between nuclear powers (Korea, Laos, Berlin, Suez,

Quemoy, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Israel, etc.) and it is easy to see that 5 or 10 more such confrontations in this game of 'nuclear roulette' might indeed give us only a 50-50 chance of living until 1980 or 1990. Many agricultural experts also think the great famines will begin within this next decade, with deaths that may reach 100 million people in densely populated countries like India and China. Others think the new grains and agricultural methods may now be able to keep the food supply ahead of the population growth, but still others think the re-education of farmers and consumers to use the new grains cannot proceed fast enough to make a difference. If famine does come, it will be catastrophic. Besides the direct human suffering, it will further increase international instabilities, with food riots, troops called out, governments falling, and international interventions that will change the world's political map. In addition, the next decade is likely to see continued crises of legitimacy of our overloaded administrations, from universities and unions to cities and national governments. In a nuclear crisis or in any of our other crises today, administrators or negotiators may often work out some basis of agreement between conflicting groups or nations, only to find themselves rejected by their people on one or both sides, who are then left with no mechanism except to escalate their battles further. What finally makes all of our crises still more dangerous is that they are now coming on top of each other. What administrations are not prepared to deal with are multiple crises, a crisis of crises all at one time. Dr. Platt thinks this multiplication of domestic and international crises today will shorten the period of a 50-50 chance for survival to more like 5 to 10 years. He is saying we may have even less than a 50% chance of living until 1980. Anyone who feels more hopeful about getting past the nightmares of the 1970's has only to look beyond them to the monsters of pollution and population rising up in the 1980's. We are in the gravest danger of destroying our society, our world, and ourselves in any of a number of different ways well before the end of this century.

So much then for an outline of what man sees ahead for himself and for 'his' world.

THE TIMES FROM GOD'S VIEWPOINT

Now let us look at a few of the things Holy Scripture has to say prophetically about the time we are in. Jesus told His disciples that for those outside everything becomes a parable, but to the followers of Christ will be entrusted the secrets (Mark 4:11). The Old Testament contains much of this forward looking prophecy, so we will examine a few of the passages relating to our subject (2Tim.3:16, ICor.10:11).

Ex.12:3-6. For an understanding of the time period before Christ, we should note that the lamb (a type of Christ) was set apart on the 10th day and then sacrificed on the 14th day. At Adam's fall, the Lamb (Christ) was needed or marked out in God's plan and then there was a waiting period of 4000 years up to the

time of Jesus Christ's death on the Cross, for to the Lord 1000 years is as a day (2Pet.3:8).

Joshua 6:1-16. Jericho is a type for the enemy of Jesus Christ and Joshua is a type of Christ. For 6 days the city of Jericho was encompassed, but not until early on the 7th day (Josh.6:15) was the city taken by the blowing of the trumpets and the shout of victory. This is a type of the fall of Satan's stronghold in this world at the beginning of the 7th 'day', which is known in Scripture as the Day of the Lord, or the Millenium (1000 years) of peace and righteousness on earth. From Ex.12:3-6, we know that 4000 years of the cycle of 7 'days' was fulfilled before Christ, so we know there must be 2 more 'days', or 2000 years, required to fill out man's work week of 6 'days', or 6000 years, before the millenial sabbath (rest) or Day of the Lord can begin. In that 7th 'day', man shall cease from his own works conceived in his perverted mind and in that 7th 'day', God takes over.

Joshua 3:4. The Ark of Testimony was a type of Christ, and there was to be a space of about 2000 units between the Ark and the people who followed. Those people who have been prepared are to follow (in time) about 2000 years after Christ (the Ark) had crossed over into the Kingdom, when they also are to cross over into the Kingdom, as He did.

Ex.19:1-20. This chapter displays a type of the new Covenant through Christ. The people were to be sanctified by Moses (a type of Christ) for 2 days (today and tomorrow) and then the people were to be ready for the Lord's coming down on the 3rd day (19:16-20), - a type of the 2nd coming of Christ. Here again is shown about 2 days (2000) years from the confirming of the New Covenant by the blood of Christ until He returns.

Hosea 5:15 . I (Christ) will return to My place on high until they repent and seek My face and require Me. Hosea 6:2. After 2 days the Lord (Christ) will revive us, quicken us, give us life; on the 3rd day He will raise us up that we may live before Him (raised into His glory in His heavenly Kingdom). :3 His going forth is certain as the dawn; He will come as the latter rain (which matures the fruit harvest). Taken in context, the fulfillment must be in our time. The time spoken of here extends from the time Jesus returned to His place on high after the resurrection until He will raise up those who are sufficiently prepared, a period of 2 'days', and 2 'days' is about 2000 years.

The New Testament also contains forward viewing prophecy in relevant pictures.

Luke 13:32. In this context, Jesus could not have been speaking of literal days when He said He would be driving out demons and performing healings today and tomorrow, and on the 3rd day complete His course. This was spoken some time before His ministry ended, and there is no indication His course was completed (perfected) on the literal 3rd day after He spoke these words. So the 'today and tomorrow' refers to the 2 days or 2000 years, during which He has been doing such works by the power of His Spirit through chosen ministries. On the 3rd day now beginning to dawn, His course shall be made complete (perfected) by

those of His Body (His called out Church) who come into maturity (perfection) and by the joining to Glory of the Head (Christ) and the mature portion of that Body, the prepared Church.

John 2:1. On the 3rd day, there was a wedding, and the Bible elsewhere foretells of the Bride being joined to her Husband and the wedding guests assembled. Jesus chose this event as a type by which He would manifest His glory (2:11). At the time of the wedding, by the washing and filling from the water of the Word and the Spirit (2:7), the earthen vessel of man is changed to contain imperishable 'wine', the good wine being saved until the last (2:9-10). After 2 'days', or about 2000 years, and at the beginning of the 3rd 'day', there is to be the wedding at which that fully prepared portion of the Body of Christ, the Bride, is joined to her Husband, Christ, followed by the wedding supper.

John 4:40-43. Jesus left Judea and the Jews who had rejected Him and then stayed 2 days in the city of Samaria. The word 'Samaria' means watchtower or look-out tower and is a type of the heaven world where Jesus has remained for 2 'days' (2000 years) after being rejected and crucified by those of His own nation. On the 3rd day, He returned to Galilee (John 4:3-4, 43-44). The word 'Galilee' means a circle and refers to the circuitous area of the whole world (Isa.40:22), and Scripture also speaks of Galilee of the <u>nations</u> (Isa.9:1, Matt.4:15). Here again is the consistent pattern of about 2000 years and then, on the morning of the 3rd millenium after Christ, He will return.

However, the coming of the new day in Jewish reckoning began when darkness fell; during the Roman occupation, there were the 4 night watches from 6 pm to 6 am which started the new day, and it was only during the 4th watch that the light of the new day really began to show. In other words, the visible coming on of the new day is progressive; there is a withdrawing of the darkness at the same time as a coming on of the new light. Our further study will provide confirmation that we are now beginning the entrance into the 3rd day (the Day of the Lord, the 1000 years of peace and righteousness), but the evidence of the closing darkness of the 2nd day are still very much present. For better understanding, we should also see that the 2 'days' (2000 years) are not necessarily reckoned <u>only</u> on the basis of our 365 day solar year. There is also a reckoning on a lunar year, and the Lord's perfect time may be reckoned according to the earth's original sin-free orbit of 360 days a year, both of which would result in a shortening of time for fulfillment of 2000 years as compared to the solar year reckoning. Although the 2000 solar years do not end until 2000 AD, there is a different ending according to the lunar calendar. Every new moon called for the blowing of trumpets and the Book of Revelation declares there is to be a blowing of the Trumpets to announce the new period. The 2000 lunar years (354.3 days per year) were completed <u>about</u> 1940 AD, and it was then the Trumpets of Revelation <u>began</u> to be fulfilled, as we shall see when we get to that portion of our study. However, the reckoning of the 2000 year period of 360 days a

year is completed about 1971 AD. From this we can see a gradual inception of the 3rd day, but on any basis we can see that the 3rd day's arrival is to be within our contemporary generation.

In recorded history, something special apparently occurs every 1000 years in God's plan. Adam began the cycle about 4000 BC, Enoch was translated without seeing death about 3000 BC, Abram was set apart about 2000 BC to become father of a new nation and of nations, the preparation of David for the building of the glorious Temple by Solomon occurred about 1000 BC, and Christ was born about 1 AD: The Church officially split and the world peoples became the modern nations we know today about 1000 AD, and the new Millenial Age of Christ's Kingdom on earth is promised about 2000 AD. Between the birth of a new man, Adam, to the birth of a new nation in Abram were about 2000 years, during which God worked with individuals. From Abram to Christ were 2000 years, a period during which God worked with nations. Jesus Christ brought to birth the Body of Christ among all nations, a super-race so to speak, and there is a period of 2000 years until that Body of chosen people from all nations will possess the world so that God can work then with the world as a whole.

In many portions of Scripture there is an apparent division of the whole quantity into components of 2/3 and 1/3, and so it is with the first 6 'days' of man's work week which then ends in the 7th 'day' of rest (Heb.4:9-11). The 6000 years from Adam to the new Age just ahead of us is divided into the 2/3 part from Adam to Christ (4000 years), the first man of a new race to the first Man of a new race, and into the 1/3 part from Christ to the inauguration of His Kingdom of Righteousness on earth, the presentation of the King to the full reign of the King over the whole of His Kingdom.

There are also several periods of 430 years cited in Scripture for our guidance. The period of 430 years has spanned that time from the giving of a covenant to the time which brings the beginning of freedom from a system of bondage through the application of a new contract. Abram was called out as a liberator and 430 years later God presented a new agreement to Israel, a nation, at Sinai. Moses was called out as a liberator and 430 years later, David was given new promises. David was called out as a liberator and 430 years later, God announced His plan involving all nations through Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the prophecies of Daniel. Nehemiah was called out as a liberator and 430 years later, God presented a new agreement through Jesus Christ for individuals in a Body among all nations. About 590 BC, Ezekiel prophecied about another 430 years (Ezek.4:5-6), in the Old Testament equivalent to the New Testament Book of Revelation. This 430 years has seen a partial fulfillment in Jesus Christ, but looks forward into the conclusion of the Church Age as well. Luther was called out to be a liberator (1520-25 AD) and 430 years later, God has opened up another agreement leading toward <u>full</u> deliverance for spirit, soul and <u>body</u> and into reigning with Him over all the earth. In lunar timekeeping, associa-

ted with trumpet blowing in Jewish history, this 430 year period is concluded when the Revelation Trumpets began to announce the entering of the new Age and the fading out of the old Age (about 1940). On perfect time, this 430 year period is concluded in about 1948, when the nation of Israel was re-born, a nation always closely associated with the working of the Lord's plans. In solar time, this 430 years extended into a new revival of the Holy Spirit's work in about 1954, which will not be damped out.

Jesus told His disciples about two signs which would indicate the coming in of the New Age and the fading out of the Church age, and both of these two signs have taken place in the 1940-1948 period. He spoke of the fig tree (always a symbol for the nation of Israel) coming into bud and leaf again, and the nation of Israel did in May, 1948 (Luke 21:29-31). He also spoke of the powers of the heavens being disrupted and shaken, and this was first demonstrated in July, 1945, when the results of man's disruption or re-orientation of the natural energy relationship within the atom was applied for destructive purposes by the detonation of the atom bomb (Lk.21:26). Jesus also said that when all these things taken together <u>begin</u> to occur (21:28), the generation then living shall not pass away until <u>all</u> has taken place and been completed (21:32). How many years are there in a generation? In the wilderness journey just prior to a crossing over into a promised land, it took somewhat <u>less</u> than 40 years for that generation to pass away, but Jesus said the generation at the time these things begin to occur shall <u>not</u> have passed away before the Age is completed. The discovery of how to disrupt the relationships within the atom for application in the fission bomb took place in the 1939-1945 period and, 30 years later, we are again at another juncture in time at which those who have become prepared by meeting all of God's requirements are to cross over into a promised land to become <u>manifested</u> as sons of God (Ro. 8:19). These two signs also point to the latter half of the 1970-1980 decade for the phasing out of the Church Age.

Many things are happening in the Bible lands pointing to the near return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and things in the world also, but there are in addition what might be considered awesome signs in outer space which seem to point to the belief that one great age is ending and another beginning. While we are not to give our attention to astrology, which is calculated to lead men into placing their dependence elsewhere than on God and is an abomination to Him, there is such a thing as heavenly astronomy which has to do with the study of the heavenly bodies and the signs, seasons, days and years (Gen.1:14) and the way in which they denote the wonderful plans and arrangements of God (Psalms 19:1-4). Nearly 2000 years ago, the 'wise men' in the East gave attention to the placement of a light and its position in the heavens, and were prepared to recognize the time for Christ's coming. The relative positions of the sun and moon and other of the planets and stars are used to indicate the appropriate times for special activity in Scripture. For example, trumpets were blown

at the time of the new moon. Passover was celebrated at the full moon, etc. The several portions of the heavens are also arranged in star patterns which can be used as indicators of times of greater importance. In ancient times, Saturn became identified as the 'star' of the prince or ruler of the world. In December, 1977, this planet moves into the zodiacal sign of Virgo, a sign in the heavens specially connected with events affecting God's chosen people. How very awesome and challenging to note that this event also takes place within the 1970-1980 decade. The Chaldeans were astronomers and astrologers of note and their name for Saturn was STUR (pronounce Satūr). The Chaldean language used the letters for numbers as well as for writing words and the total value of the letters (60-400-6-200) in this word makes it one of the many words whose number sum is 666, an association in this case of more than passing interest when we come to the study of 2Thess.2.

Since the Lord is the same yesterday, today and always, He uses the same patterns again and again in what He does. What are some of these which may be associated with the dawning of the new day? Jesus said, "I am the root and the offspring of David"; He also said, "I am the bright and morning star" (Rev.22:16), revealing two descriptive titles having to do with His first and His second comings respectively. When Jesus came to earth the first time, He became the root and the offspring of David from the moment He was born as a babe in Bethlehem. His birth then is a starting point which may be compared or contrasted with a starting point for His second coming. But following His birth, there was an inception and preparation period of 30 years before He <u>suddenly</u> <u>came</u> to His temple for its cleansing (Mal.3:1). At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus cleansed the physical temple at Jerusalem (John 2:13-17), but this act was symbolic of the fact that the cleansing of His temple-nation of the Jews had then begun. Subsequently, His entire ministry of 3-1/2 years was given to that cleansing, the driving out of literally 1000's of evil spirits from the people and the land. People by the 1000's were set free from possessing, oppressing, vexing and afflicting spirits, with the healing of all kinds of sicknesses, diseases and infirmities (Matt.4:23-24, 8:16, 10:1, 8). However, the religious leaders turned the people against Jesus and He was rejected and crucified. Jesus foresaw this and prophecied the consequences in parable form (Matt.12:43-45). The picture presented was the man delivered from an unclean spirit, but not receiving anything positive to fill its place. The spirit returned with 7 other spirits worse than itself, all entered the man, and his last state was worse than the first. Jesus then gave the application by saying, "So shall it be with this wicked generation". The spirits Jesus had driven from the land returned, bringing hosts of others with them, and in the subsequent years the state or condition of the Jews became increasingly worse, until their temple and nation were completely destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD; those not killed were scattered throughout the gentile nations.

If Jesus was the root and the offspring of David at His first coming, then Jesus as the bright and morning star refers

to His coming again, following the night (as the morning star does) of spiritual darkness which indicated would descend upon the world (John 9:4). Since the Lord does choose to use His patterns repetitively, should we not expect the pattern of His first coming to repeat with an inception and preparation period before He again suddenly comes to His temple? The very symbolism of the morning star seems to show this, for the morning star is seen shining in the eastern sky as a new day begins to dawn, preceding the actual sunrise. So Peter writes, "We have the prophetic word made firmer still to which you will do well to pay close attention as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the day or morning star rises in your hearts (2Pet.1:19). The day of the Lord of which Peter wrote is now dawning and the day star (Christ) is now rising in a new and in a living way in many hearts. We are now in the time of preparation leading up to His sudden coming to His temple again - this time to cleanse it for good.

When was the beginning of the end time period of inception and preparation when the morning star began to rise? When Jesus came the first time and was born as the root and offspring of David, a star appeared as a sign (Matt.2:1-2), and about 30 years later He began His ministry (Lk. 3:23). Should we not then expect that God would give another sign in this end time to indicate the inception period of the bright and morning star? Consider this: after almost 2000 years without a homeland, the Jews declared themselves a re-born nation in 1948 and the star of David began to flutter over the land of Palestine. This was the ensign mentioned by Isaiah (Isa.11:9-12) which would be set up by God for the assembling of the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah. Jesus said that the shooting forth of the fig tree (a symbol or type for the Jewish people - Hos.9:10) would be a sign of the nearness of His coming and Kingdom - so near that the generation living at the time of the sign would not pass away before all would be fulfilled (Lk.21:29-32). A generation is usually considered to be about 30 years, the same length of time between Jesus' birth and His coming to His temple. I am not trying to set dates, but only pointing out the parallel which seems to be more than a coincidence, and pointing up several relationships which strongly indicate the proximity of the end of the Church Age (2Pet.3, IThess.5:1-9, Amos 3:7).

The inception period is also a preparation period and, when we see the significance of the 1948 birth of the Jewish nation and the raising of the ensign of the star of David as related to the morning star period, we can also point to confirming evidence that in the late 40's a moving of the Holy Spirit began in a number of places. And in the same period of time the Lord began to raise up a number of men in a type of deliverance ministry of evangelism and healing that has reached world-wide. Then in the late 50's and through the 60's, large numbers of people in all denominations reached out for the Holy Spirit's fulness and have come to know Christ in a new, a living way. The fact that much which was begun in the Spirit is now being perpetuated

by the flesh (Gal.3:3) only points up the need for each one of us to examine ourselves on aims, motives, methods, etc., for we are living in a time of great testing and sifting. The Lord is preparing vessels to be completely emptied of self, sanctified by His Spirit and fit for the Master's use (2Tim.2:21), by being increasingly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Ro. 8:29).

Then what will take place when Jesus again suddenly comes to His temple, following the preparation period? He said that those who look for Him must be ready and must be awake, alert and watching (Lk.12:37), but to those not ready and watching, even among His household of the Church, He will come as a thief in the night (:39-40). One who comes as a thief comes to take something away, and the only evidence the unwatchful, dozing householder has of the thief having been there is that something of value is missing. The Lord also says of those who consistently reverence Him and talk to one another about Him and think of His character and influence (not all Christians do this consistently) that they are His peculiar treasure, His jewels (Mal.3:16-17).

In His letter to the Church at Thyatira, Jesus mentions His coming again, giving certain promises to those who are by then overcomers, and He pledges Himself as the morning star to them (Rev.2:25-28). The pledge is the promissory betrothal from the Bridegroom to the Bride company during this time of preparation. The period of the morning star is the time for the overcomers of the Bride company to make themselves ready (Matt.25:10, Rev.19:7). Jesus said, "You also must be ready; otherwise the Son of Man comes at an hour when you don't anticipate Him" (Lk.12:40). He also warns, "Take heed to yourselves, lest.....that day come upon you suddenly, like a trap or noose, for this snare will come upon all who live on the face of the earth" (Lk.21:34-35). The word for snare here indicates a net or small rope used to trap birds or small animals. In the Old Testament, the name Rebekah means rope or a noose, as a maiden who ensnares by her beauty, - which Isaac was. Jesus was ensnared into death because of His love for the Church (Eph.5:25), but in this end time, the snare or trap which is suddenly to come upon the world unawares is Christ's taking of His jewels, His Bride company, as symbolized by Isaac (a type of Christ) taking Rebekah to be his bride (Gen.24:67). It is also symbolized in the 'catching up' of the man-child group of matured, spirit-prepared ones (Rev.12:5), who are then seen as the 144,000 group of firstfruits in heaven (Rev.14:1-4). The dawning period of the morning star will be completed when the Lord suddenly comes to His temple to take His Bride company. The consummation of the time of betrothal and preparation then makes possible a further coming to His temple by the Lord, for the sunrise always follows the dawn. Should we not expect the Sun, the Son, of righteousness to arise with healing in His wings, the extension of Himself (Mal.4:2)? This further coming and arising, after taking out His jewels from the household of the Church, speaks of the great 'latter rain' outpouring and revival which will take place shortly after the

Bride is taken. After a time of waiting in the 'upper room', those of the remaining Church, who have humbled themselves in a time of continuous prayer and seeking the Lord, are to experience the sudden coming of the Holy Spirit in a 2nd Pentecost, more far-reaching than in Acts 2:2, to empower the Church for its Tribulation ministry and to also prepare a great multitude (Rev.7:9) to meet the Lord in the air at His coming at the close of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:29-30, IThess.4:13-17). The fulness of God's purpose through His Church in this end time will not come until He has shocked the Church world to its knees through the bodily translation and glorification of the first-fruits Bride company (Rev.14: 1-4). This will constitute His sudden coming to His temple and the beginning of the 3-1/2 years of cleansing during the Tribulation. He will cleanse both the temple of His Church, throughout Christendom, and the temple-nation of the Jews (Mal. 3:1-3). This prophecy through Malachi had an initial application in Christ's first coming and a partial fulfillment, but the complete fulfillment of the covenant of peace (Mal.2:5) will be experienced with His second coming. The prophecy also has an application to the present moment, for it is <u>now</u>, in this day of preparation, that a 'remnant' is being cleansed and purged. God is moving by His Spirit today. Now is our day of preparation and, for those who will not limit the Holy One of Israel, it can be a time of increasing blessing and power, ever going from glory to glory (2Cor.3:18), as the day star rises in the heart (2Pet. 1:18-19). Now is the New Day dawning. The outworking of God's plan is ever progressive, but we are not to become so absorbed in the future that we miss what He has for us today. He is the God of the Now, the I AM (Ex. 3:14).

How mighty and awesome are the events on the near horizon in this day in which we are living! Seemingly insurmountable problems beset the human race, problems of a scope and complexity such as the world has never seen and for which man has <u>no</u> resolution that will come even close to being the answer. We can, as many will, bury our heads in the sand and hope the troubles will go away, but the inexorable march of history will eventually catch up with those who do. Is there not a God, a mighty and loving Creator, who has planned and programmed the coming impasse so that those He loves might have the opportunity to see His mighty hand of deliverance from a system which already has the mark of death on it? Through these developments, are not multitudes being ushered into the valley of decision so that they might have the opportunity to know the living Christ and receive Life forevermore (Joel 3:14-16)?

There is an almost too obvious concentration of indicators all pointing at the 1970-80 decade, and more specifically at the last portion of it, as the most important time in millions of years of God's planning. Even those few years during which God Almighty personally taught His disciples in Palestine and then gave His life for them were preparatory for this coming decade. Without question, the darkest time mankind has ever

seen will soon be here, bringing intensified wickedness, rebellion and oppression, but, for those willing to become fully prepared in the Lord's pattern, it will be a time more full of light, cooperative enabling and power, protection and joyful anticipation than mankind has ever experienced. To be fearful or at peace will be totally the result of individual choice on the question of becoming fully prepared on our Lord's time schedule.

But before leaving the subject of the time-table in Scripture and the signs and indicators now being seen both on earth and in space, let us be aware of the real danger that sincere believers, as well as others, may become so engrossed in watching for the signs of Christ's coming as to remain completely unprepared for Him, - or even miss Him altogether. It seems almost incredible, but it is fact that the religious and Bible students of 1900 years ago were all expecting the coming of the Messiah, were studying all the prophecies about His coming and had all the details at their finger-tips. Nevertheless, they so misinterpreted the meaning of the Scriptures upon which they concentrated that, when the Messiah arrived, scarcely any of them were able to accept the fact that He really had come. The mode of His coming was so different from that which their interpretations of the prophecies had led them to expect, they could not adjust their concepts to fit in with the glorious plan God Himself designed at the beginning and personally came to implement. Are not all the patterns given in Scripture for our instruction (2Tim.3:16), and is not a similar lack of preparation and a missing of His second coming grievously possible for the religious leaders and Bible students through their erection of man's interpretation of God's plan as revealed in Scripture (2Pet.1:20-21)? Jesus spoke as though this is just what will happen when He returns. There will be Christians earnestly watching for the signs of His coming, even joyfully expecting to be caught up to join Him in the air, yet they will be so unready for His coming that, just as ordinarily irreligious people, they will be unable to participate in it.

What is required of those who decide to be made ready, regardless of what it costs? Jesus said they must be doing the will and commandments of their Lord (Lk.12:35-48). As preparation, He is pointedly suggesting that we here and now, while waiting for His coming, live according to the laws and the minimum standard of the Kingdom of heaven which He taught in the Sermon on the Mount and which He demonstrated so faithfully and gloriously in His own life and reactions to everything that happened to Him, His intention is that we copy Him (Ro.8:29, Eph.5:1), live as He lived (IJohn 2:5-6), and be righteous as He is (IJohn 3:6-7), - for the righteous are barely saved (IPet.4:17-18). Jesus Christ requires in those who would then join Him that they have already become without spot or wrinkle, holy and faultless (Phil.2:13-15, Eph.5:27, 2Pet. 3:14). This goal no man can reach on his own, so it is hopeless without both a supernatural enabling and a consistent following through in the application of that enabling by the recipient. We must become very much aware of the signs and

indicators, but we must know their place in God's larger plan so that we can accurately respond to His requirements. The study we are now undertaking is to lead into an understanding of the practice of the pattern God designed for us so that each one who cares enough can then become prepared, and be prepared on schedule.

THE GRAND PLAN

God's plan for those who love Him (those willing and eager to obey His commandments - John 14:21, 2John 6) goes far beyond this life and this Age, even beyond the accumulation of as many Ages as can be visualized, far beyond and above the Millenium Age of peace and righteousness over all the earth. The immediate stage of the fulfillment of God's plan is His work with the Body of Christ to regain all that Adam lost, and then to enable progress so far beyond as to make Adam's standing in God's very presence seem as only a beginning.

God's intention for mankind is that of reflecting Himself, <u>all</u> His power, knowledge, wisdom, accomplishment and love, for that reflection is to be a very large one to show the fulness and completeness of Himself (Gen.1:27-28). Mankind operating within God's plan is intended to subdue the whole earth, in the sense of developing the planet and all that is upon it after wresting it from the evil forces of Satan, while reflecting God, and, therefore, man must reach the stature necessary to exercise authority and dominion over the earth, administering God's plan in a reflection of Him. To reach this stature, man is intended to eat of the Tree of Life so that Christ (the Tree of Life) might be integrated into man and so that Christ might be reflected through him (Gen.2:16-17, Eph.4:10). But man took a detour off the high way of God's plan, (Gen.3:22-24), so God first intends to bring man back to that High Way in a restoration of man to His ongoing plan (Gen.3:14-15). First there must be a subduing of the 'world' within man, the microcosm of the 'birds of the air' (thoughts), the 'fish of the sea' (desires and emotions) and the 'animals' (the carnal drives, native talents and avarice), and then a development of a new nature (Gen.1:26).

The restoration of man's progress toward the attainment of God's purposes is exclusively through the corporate Body of Christ, and therefore He gifts that Body with training ministries which are to build it up. By the building process, the Body of Christ is to be brought to maturity (perfection) and is to become fully equipped (Eph. 4:11-12) to reflect God's complete likeness so as to bring the whole of the earth (microcosm first and then macrocosm) within His plan, and to administer that plan over all the earth. Therefore, it is God's intention that the Body of Christ attain an absolute unity in faith (His faith <u>and</u> active response to that faith when it is given - Eph.4:5, Heb.11:1-8), and a full comprehension and an accurate knowledge of Jesus Christ in order to become fully matured, which maturity is nothing less than the standard that is Christ's own completeness (perfection). The Body of Christ is to <u>quickly</u> reach that measure of the fulness of Christ and the completeness found in Him (Eph.4:13),

because there are now only a few, very few, years before He brings this Church Age to its conclusion. Without such maturity, the members of the Body will be tossed to and fro by the deceits of men who play the game with 'loaded dice' (Eph.4:14, Matt.24:24). There are to be no casual Christians indefinitely in the Lord's plan (Matt.12:33, Rev.3:16). The equipping of the Body with the gifts of ministries is for the purpose of establishing an army, perfectly trained for the Lord's use. The <u>minimum</u> requirement for spiritual maturity is that of reaching Christ's full stature and this is confirmed by the fact that only the use of the full power of God's Holy Spirit in the man Jesus Christ proved sufficient to overcome the strong and wiley Satan.

The Bible states that God entrusted this world and its atmospheric envelop in stewardship to Lucifer (Satan) while that mighty being was still found to be perfect (ICor.10:26, John 12:31, IJohn 5:19, Eph.2:2, Ezek. 28:12, 15). But since a steward must be found faithful (ICor.4:2) and Satan has been rebelling by destroying that with which he was entrusted (Isa.14:5-6, 12), God will reclaim that stewardship when Satan's rebellion has served in completing that part in God's plan for accelerating the maturing of a first portion of the Body of Christ to the standard of Christ's own completeness. Then the offspring of the woman (the true Church) will trample Satan and his followers (Gen.3:15, Rev.12:5-8) and, in fact, we may be those 'feet' who will trample him (Ro.16:20), if we will prepare. However, if we continue to use the ways Satan taught Adam, the reliance on God-excluding reasoning, desire, feelings and intellect, the reliance on natural strength and on physical and material resources, we will lose the contest just as quickly as Adam did. Satan is strong, supernaturally strong, so other weapons and other strategies are necessary. Again, from the viewpoint of the spiritual world, the issue is that of the destruction of the human race, for God's chosen weapon against Satan's rebellion is that remnant of utterly dedicated men which chooses to line up wholly with God. Since there will be no re-runs of the show-down with Satan, the army God will use <u>must</u> previously have received a complete and perfect training. To qualify for participation in this elite and elect force, one must have developed an unfailing loyalty and reliability (in any army an unreliable man is a hazard to everyone around him), a perfected response to obey in absolute faith (even without always understanding why), a skill in using the supernatural weapons with full effectiveness, and must have learned how to back-up, strengthen and preserve those others by his side in the Body of Christ army. This development can only take place during the actual practice of listening and obedience within and among those of the Body of Christ. Seek first His Kingdom <u>and His righteousness</u>, and all the other things will be added to you (Matt.6:33). These two things are first, the seeking of His government (Kingdom), His Lordship, through repentance that is deep and thorough down

inside, and the seeking of His righteousness in a continuous and faithful demonstration of righteous thought, attitude, purpose and response in the pattern Jesus Christ presented in His own life (IJohn 3:6-7, IPet.4:17-18, Ro.8:29), through obtaining and then persistently using the power of the Holy Spirit, just as He did. Nothing less will be adequate.

'Just believing', as so many traditional Christians use the phrase, brings nothing of itself. Only what the Lord places within the members of His army will be of any use in Body protection and in dispossessing the enemy; everything we can present to the Lord from our own physical inheritance is a drag. His impartations of empowerment, His gifts and ministries from the Spirit, the fruits of the Spirit, and God's full armor are absolutely necessary, - all of them -, within the corporate Body of Christ, just as Jesus had them. Without them the Body cannot stand in the final contest with Satan's hosts, and God has chosen no alternates, only this Body. Whether it is large or small, this Body will complete the job with His power, but only those fully prepared will be able to handle that much power, and only those will be useful and used. Other Christians will be turned back (Matt.7:21-27), as in Gideon's army in which 300 were employed out of 32,000 called, because most were first concerned about their own feelings and satisfactions. But that 300 did the job against a multitude like the sand (Judges 7:2-7, 12).

Those who are prepared shall do greater works than Jesus did, because He is now glorified (John 14:12). Who are the manifested sons (Ro.8:19-23), except those who have become prepared, for only in them is the completed heirship of adult adoption or placement which brings full exercise of all rights to that son. They alone are to be the primary instruments for setting the world free of decay and corruption by showing the way, a High Way; they alone will demonstrate as a firstfruits group a full redemption, even including that redemption of mortal bodies to deathless heavenly glory or earthly glory (IThess.5:23-24), before Christ returns personally.

THE SPECIFIC PLAN

Because of lack of understanding and lack of willingness to enter into and apply the empowerment necessary for subsequent service in the Lord's army, Christians in these concluding days of the Age are even now living far below their covenanted (contracted) rights.

Isaiah speaks directly to today's spiritual Israel (Gal. 3:29, Ro.2:28-29, 4:16), of which each man may be a part, - if he chooses, to leave the structure of limitations erected by man, (Babylon) all of it, and come into the Lord's provisioning (Isa.51:1-4, 12-16, 52:1-12, Jer. 50:4-9, Rev.18:2-5). Before the Kingdom of peace and righteousness can be established on earth, all that is in any way against God must be utterly swept away (Matt.22:44, Heb.12:26-29). All things must be swept clean so that every person remaining is sincerely seeking and welcoming His rule, and then will His Kingdom of righteousness begin. It

is His law that He will not force His will upon any person, but every person who asks from his heart has a clear chance to participate fully in active cooperation. Our loving and concerned Lord offers the potential of His complete protection, physical as well as spiritual (Ps. 91:2-13), for He is not willing that any should perish (2Pet.3:9). Therefore, all who do perish will do so by hastening the calamity upon themselves (Prov. 21:18), in spite of our Lord's provision, through wilful ignorance or knowing disobedience (2Thess.1:6-9). If we have the Book and don't read it, - that is wilful ignorance. If we know what pleases Him and don't do it, - that is knowing disobedience. If we read and see what He offers and don't take all He offers, that too is knowing disobedience, for He offers us no thing we do not need. Dare we presume that man's child-like evaluation of what is offered is more accurate than the Creator's?

The Bible is full of God's intention and His offer to build up a people in His likeness, not only as individuals, but specifically as a welded-together Body of persons having a unity of purpose, plan and objective within that Body which is in complete unity with His purpose, His plan and His objective. The result is to be a capability and a practice of reflecting an accurate likeness of Himself in the full stature of Jesus Christ here on earth (Eph.4:12-13), of accomplishing greater things than Jesus Christ accomplished while on earth in human flesh (John 14:12, IPet.2:9) and then of sitting with Him and co-ruling with Him over the whole earth (Rev.3:21). This progression is for all those who choose to exercise sufficient diligence in preparation, for there is only one way open for proceding toward God's objectives and reaching them. There is no other successful approach except through Jesus Christ, none except through the exquisitely precise patterns, and only those patterns, which He designed and recorded for us to follow (Rev.15:4). Therefore, each person needs to know what are His patterns, to separate those from man-devised patterns which might appear almost as good, and to steadfastly follow in those which He presents. To know them first requires the establishment of a relationship with Jesus as Lord so He then can have our permission to tell and expose us to what needs to be done as we search out His will. It requires the continuous ingesting and digesting of His instruction book, a continuous willingness toward and cooperation with His Holy Spirit as He seeks to impart training and leading, and requires a continuous two-way communication (prayer and listening); no element can be omitted in His plan. It is also a vital part of His plan that this preparing be done among others who are of like mind (Heb.10:24-25) so that Christ as the Head of the Body can utilize the 'hands' of the Body to clothe it and the 'feet' of the Body to support it, etc. (ICor.12:27). Under His rules, preparation cannot be accomplished 'solo'.

In order for there to be a building up in the Lord's design, there must first be a restoration to the beginning He requires, and many such pictures of restora-

tion are given in the Bible for our edification so we will not miss this last cycle of restoration in the Church Age. The apostles of Christ were moving in this pattern and were teaching others to do so, but even in that time of great light there was also a pervasive moving away from the Lord's design (2Thess.2:7), replacing it gradually with man's preferences, additions and subtractions, until the Church entered the 'Dark Ages' with almost no spiritual light. Partial restorations were brought about through such men as Luther, Wesley, Huss, Calvin, Darby, etc., but each attempt eventually was turned off into a 'parking lot' or 'detour' and fell short of full restoration. For contemporary application, Jesus requires a return to the Church's first love, placing Christ at the head again, instead of hierarchies of organization (Rev.2:1-7). First there must be a willingness in the members of the Body to allow Jesus to be Lord without interference from man's opinions or competition from man's 'good' works. First there must be a return to recognizing that our Lord did design a plan for establishing and building His Body and the members of His Body which needs no improving, no strengthening, no additions and no subtractions, a return to a willingness to accept that plan He designed and a return to a willingness to accept all that His plan offers to the members of His Body. He calls for a fervency of dedication (Ro.12:1) and for the possession of all He offers, because all of that is an absolute necessity (Rev.3:14-22). He says that living in man's religious patterns, the best of them (Matt.5:20), brings no lasting results, even from much application, and that God's house must be built from His materials and in His design, or the 'dew' and the 'produce' will be held back (Hag.1:4-11). First there must be a willingness to respond to all that is required for a completed foundation as described and offered by Jesus Christ and then by His apostles (Eph.2:20). Before there can be any worthy building, a completed and firm foundation must be in place (Matt.7:24-27), including an open and honest repentance before the Lord for both the past offences committed and the residuals of bitterness, etc., left in the heart by the actions of others toward us. Also included is that vitalizing impartation of Holy Spirit empowerment (Acts 1:8) which Jesus Christ called the baptism of the Holy Spirit, typically accomplished by what Scripture describes as the 'laying on of hands' (Acts 1:5, 8:17-18, 19:6, Heb.6:1-2). Subsequently, there must be a continuing personal application of that imparted empowerment to live the life of righteousness which our pattern, Jesus Christ, lived (Matt.6:33, IPet.2:21, 4:18). There must be that personal 'coming to know Him' (Phil.3:9-11) which is accompanied by maturing into the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph.4:13).

When a people do enter His purposes and His plan to reach His objectives, and are built together as living stones in His temple, the glory of that latter house or dwelling place will be far greater than the glory in the temple of Solomon and they will have peace and prosperity (Hag.

2:7-9); that matured temple will be a Body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself (Eph. 3:19). It is to the members of this uniquely designed Body who have thus made themselves ready that Jesus will return. Other Christians, not yet ready at the time, will miss His return until they have become willing to make themselves ready (Matt.7:21-23, Rev.19:7, 22:14). It is these who have prepared themselves through His enablement upon whom the 'latter rain' will fall in a pouring out of Holy Spirit empowerment such as the world has never seen (Joel 2:25-32, Acts 2:17-21), for only those who have become prepared will be capable of handling such great power and glory. It is these who have made themselves fully ready to whom Jesus will bring full salvation in a redemption of the whole of man, in spirit, soul and body (Heb. 9:28, IThess.5:23, Ro.8:23).

But the Lord also promises a great shaking out and shaking down of every organization and development which does not have Him as its designer and builder. Much of what man considers to be fine and good and surely pleasing to God will be shaken to pieces, along with all that is recognized to be of man's building. The Bible has several records of God's tumbling down and bringing to nothing what man has attained by working apart from God, and He tells of one more time when all things will be shaken in a final removal of everything not of God so that only that which is of His design and building will remain (Heb. 12:26-27, Ro.9:27-29, Isa.2:5-22, Rev.18:1-8). The need for preparation and building to withstand this shaking reaches beyond the initial acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord (Master) and beyond a subsequent experience with the Holy Spirit, for Scripture says the fully righteous are barely saved. Those prepared ones must possess a holiness without which no man will see the Lord (Heb.12:14), must be holy as He is holy (IPet. 1:15), must be righteous as He is righteous (IJohn 3:7), must show themselves without blemish in the midst of a crooked and wicked generation (Phil.2:15), and must be perfect (complete, mature) as their heavenly Father is perfect (Matt.5:48). Only the violent (for 'knowing' Christ) can storm the gates of heaven (Matt.11:12). The protection and enabling against the shaking out is according to the preparation: full preparation - full protection and enabling; some preparation - some protection and enabling; little preparation - little protection and enabling. Following is a sampling of promises for those who do prepare: John 16:14-15, Isa.11:1-9, Isa.64:1-4, Isa.65: 13-25, Luke 12:37, Luke 21:18-19, Ro.16:20, 19:20, Eph.4:12-13, Heb.4:9-11, Rev.2:7, 11, 17, 26, 28, Rev.3:5, 12, 21, Ps.91.

If we have read the signs and indicators correctly in the world around us and in the Scripture, there are yet a few years, but very few, until the wickedness of the evil spirits and the wickedness of man will be filled up and completed in that consummating battle between the forces of our God and the forces of Satan, our adversary. Ours is the generation, this is the time in which I am persuaded we

can begin to come into knowing the exact year and day of the beginning of great tribulation (Amos 3:7, Mk.4:22), that period of intolerable anguish which is coming upon all the earth (Matt.24:8, 21). Since Satan no longer has access to Jesus Christ Himself, having been overcome by Him (Lk.10:18-19), the battle will be of both a spiritual and physical nature against His Body of Christ on earth, and will climax in a world war of far greater intensity than that of the previous two world wars. Christians will progressively be finding it necessary to move into a preparation and protection, such preparation as many have thought is not really necessary once one 'has Jesus in his life and begins to love Him'. Satan and his hosts will see to it that the pressures from national and world governments and from a new extension of socialistic economics will drive people into submission to his plan through fear (Lk.21:26), and there will be overcoming deceits poured out on people, so subtle as to almost seduce the fully prepared saints (Matt.24:24).

What has our Lord told us is necessary to be able to withstand the flood of evil (Rev. 12:15) and the onslaught of hosts of demon spirits (Rev.9: 1-3)? Before the world of this planet can be subdued for development in God's pattern, the inner world or microcosm within man must be subdued and brought into God' s plan. Man's thoughts (birds in the air), desires, emotions (fish of the sea), carnal drives, native talents and avarice (beasts in the field) must first be brought under the dominion of the spirit, instead of evidencing soul dominion (Gen. 1:26). Jesus said we Christians are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength and all our mind, - our whole being (Lk. 10:27), and loving the Lord means obeying His commands (John 14:21). Again, it is written that the righteous barely receive completed salvation (IPet. 4:18); therefore, the first things in the necessary preparation for protection and victory are the willing acceptance of the kingly rule of Jesus Christ and the application of His imparted, super physical power for living in His righteousness, - conforming to His will in thought, attitude, purpose, and action (Matt.6:33). Jesus outlined His minimum requirements in the Sermon on the Mount, and His Word specifically tells Christians that each one must copy Jesus, becoming like Him (Ro.8:29, Eph.1:5, Lk.6:40), live as He lived (IJohn 2:6), become pure as He is (IJohn 3:3), become holy as He is (IPet.1:15-16), and become perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (Matt.5:48). It is written that qualifying Christians must become holy and faultless and without spot or wrinkle in His sight while yet in their physical bodies here on earth (Phil.2:15, Eph. 5:27). That requires some doing! That requires the application of power such as only Jesus Christ has offered. The first things are His rule and His righteousness. After the engaging of these first things comes the adding on of the other things which lead to full protection, the demonstration of complete victory, and the possession of full salvation. These requirements are for each Christian, because God does not

play favorites; - what He requires of one, He requires of all (Ro.2:11).

REPENTANCE

Because the near-term objective of full redemption and full protection cannot be reached before or without the beginning of the Lord's pattern, most of us are detained there again and again, until the first things are made firm and lasting. He cannot be ruler in any segment of our living which has not been specifically presented to Him for His action on it, nor can He be ruler if there is any unwillingness to respond to <u>whatever</u> He desires, in active cooperation, but unwillingness often does rise when the expression of His will differs from our own choice or desire or reason. He cannot truly be ruler (Lord) in all the areas of our life, unless a supernatural enabling has been received and is being used, for in his own strength and abilities man is utterly unable to consistently obey God's commands (ICor.12:3). The knowledge of this inadequacy was dramatically presented for our instruction in living drama by the Israelites, God's <u>chosen</u> people, who sincerely promised and intended to obey God's commands and who continuously were disobedient since Moses acquainted them with His requirements 1500 years before Christ. It was only through the personal ministry of Jesus Christ that a supernatural enabling was made available in a precisely described pattern (Acts 1:5, 8) to men of all nations for the express purpose of making the rulership of Christ possible and practical in the life of the individual Christian and in the whole Body of Christ. But, because of accepting the deceits of Satan, most men do not recognize even the potential of becoming totally and consistently obedient and so have not searched out and availed themselves of the miracle Jesus Christ made ready for application at the beginning portion of each Christian's born-again life. Instead, man ingests lies direct from hell. For example, we hear repetitively, 'God helps those who help themselves'; 'I'm only human'; 'no one is perfect'; 'you're a product of your environment'; 'you can't win'; 'if you can't beat them, join them'. But God says don't join them, beat 'em - with God's love!

The first things in God's pattern are the kingly rule of Jesus Christ <u>and</u> His righteousness (Matt.6:33). How does this statement of Jesus correlate elsewhere in Scripture with His first requirement of repentance (Matt.3:2, Mk.1:4, Acts 2:38)? Did you repent as you first came to Jesus? Did He forgive you as a result of that repentance? You answer with an affirmation that you did repent and that He did forgive, because Scripture declares that He took <u>all</u> sin and rebellion upon Himself (and sickness and pain also), when He died on the Cross (Isa.53:4-5, 12, Matt.8:17), - that is, all of those things that we do faithfully present to Him for His action. You probably have a fairly clear concept in your mind of what constitutes repentance. For most, I suppose, repentance means seeing something that does not appear righteous, and then becoming sorry about it, sometimes with tears, and then that

repentance should terminate with asking for and receiving God's forgiveness. How does this compare with the Bible picture of repentance, for example in Matt.21:28-32? In the context of the subject of repentance (21-25), Jesus told of two sons who were asked to work in the Father's 'vineyard'. One refused but then changed his mind and did so. There was a change of mind indicated, but there was not necessarily sorrow, tears, or even an effort to notify the Father of the change of intention in this case. The repentant son just began to work. The important thing in understanding this parable is seeing that the son put into action his intention to be obedient. Repentance cannot be true or full repentance without beginning to live out the change. Repentance sometimes may not incorporate being sorry as an emotional reaction; neither do tears make a true repentance, though both sorrow and tears <u>may</u> be involved. It is not true repentance until there is a walking in the new direction (Lk.3:7-8).

Does God require a once-for-all repentance only for non-believers on the point of turning to Christ? No, He requires true repentance of Christians also, immature and mature, every time there is need for it (ICor. 15:9, ITim.1:15, Rev.2:5, 16, 22, Rev.3:19). For Christians, true repentance is a thing of the past, it is to be in the present, and it <u>must</u> also be a thing of the future. Since our God is a righteous God and since He gave man a free will as a gift, He cannot thrust or force anything upon man which he will not ask for and willingly receive. Although He did provide for the taking of <u>all</u> sins of mankind upon Himself on the Cross, He cannot deal with any specific act or attitude of sin or rebellion to lift it from the individual man and include it in the 'all', unless that item of rebellion is willingly offered up to Him to be dealt with. So often we find there are one or more things we would sort of like to keep hold of, at least for a while longer, and there are a multitude of these things, specifically or by category, which we don't remember or recognize as needing to be submitted to Him. The rebellions that must be dealt with include overt acts or omissions, but rebellions also include the affects left in us by experiencing a wrong or suspected wrong from another. Resentment, vindictiveness, hatred, self-defending indignation, critical thoughts (even if not formed into words), jealousy, envy, bitterness, etc., are all trespasses against God's commands and in His sight they require repentance (an act of 'walking' in the other direction) and forgiveness so that our praying can be effective and our listening sensitive. Not reading the Bible enough requires repentance. Unbelief of God's Word requires repentance. No response to what God offers requires repentance. Not praying and not listening requires repentance. A lack of repentance requires repentance.

There is also the 'conditioning' that develops in our being from having lived in a pattern of rebellion over a period of weeks and months and perhaps years. Acts of rebellion may be repented of and dealt with, but a root may still remain, perhaps

of guilt or self-condemnation, perhaps of something else, which in many instances has been covered over in the subconscious and remains there as an invisible doorway through which the enemy gains access, or a trigger which he can spring to dump us into a pool of discouragement or dispair which effectively cuts off God's ministering to our need and forces us to move away from the constantly victorious and joyful life God provides. There are also things needing cancellation and erasing which do not originate within ourselves, things which are transmitted or which 'wipe off' from others with whom we have associated. You know that you can pick up a spirit of discouragement or frustration or even futility from just being with or talking with another person who is broadcasting these qualities, and so it is with many other types of impartations also.

Among the many events in our lives are things that cut and hurt our ego, and so many of these damaging results are carefully covered over so that they cannot show on the surface; they become buried in the subconscious, hidden but available to trigger unexpected and sometimes explosive reactions to relatively minor future experiences. Treating the symptoms brings a temporary benefit, but only cutting out the root eliminates the symptoms. However, our righteous Lord cannot unilaterally deal with something that has not been presented to Him for His action. Each of these things call for repentance.

Each of us, to minor or major degree, has engaged in self-deception through asking the Lord to forgive all our sins in general and then let the matter drop there. It is true He has made provision for the forgiveness of all our sins when we come in true repentance, but repentance is an active response in a new direction which can only be initiated after recognizing what it is that needs forgiveness. True repentance in the Scriptural pattern requires an act of walking away from something and of walking in the new something. How can we even think of separating or severing ourselves from a sinful thing, if we don't recognize that which we are to leave? In this view, there can be no thorough repentance for a sin, rebellion or trespass which is not known to our conscious minds. Therefore, God says to come and reason with Him (that the thing may become known) so that our sins can become white as snow (Isa.1:18). Therefore, He says we are to ask Him to search and know our hearts (Ps.139:23-24) so He can bring to our conscious recognition those things that have been submerged and covered over, whether they exist because of sin initiated by ourselves alone, whether they are the results of what others have done in wronging us, or whether they are from impartations received during physical contact (especially sinful physical contact) or social contact (especially breakbreaking bread together - ICor. 5:11). The Bible states that man's sorrow (introspection) is deadly, but that godly grief produces repentance (the turning from and the turning to) which leads to deliverance; in other words, the act of walking in the

new thing brings about the deliverance from the old thing. Let the wicked (any who has not been fully purified) forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon (Isa.55:7).

Thorough repentance is not accomplished in a few moments, an hour, a day, or often in weeks. By invitation, the Lord must search our inner being and progressively expose the rebellions hidden there, before they can be given to Him for eradication. It is a cooperative venture, His doing the searching while we are reviewing the periods of our life during which the things might have been hidden; not 'soul searching' to dig up all the garbage in our life for another review, for that can be devastating, but an eager and willing reception for knowing things forgotten and overlooked as the Holy Spirit brings them to the light of our minds. This process takes time for most people.

Now we can begin to see the association of true repentance with the righteousness which Christ requires. True repentance cannot be accomplished without beginning to walk in Christ's righteousness; the 'turning from' necessitates a 'turning to'. Also walking in Christ's righteousness cannot become fact until there has been the exercise of true repentance; in order for there to be the 'turning to', there must have been the'turning from' so that the result retains no mixture. Now it is also more easily seen that there must not only be the initial repentance in turning from the world system to God's rule, but there must then be the progressive repentance for Christians in which there is turning from specific trespasses and specific categories of trespasses and turning to the righteous walk to replace the old. Because this turning requires super-natural enabling, the Lord has provided the availability of that extra power at the beginning of the re-born life for all who desire to have it. That power is the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Ro.6:4) and is sufficient to deliver each person from the <u>compulsion</u> to sin, - to think bitter thoughts, to engage in jealousy, envy, criticism, resentment, coveting, etc. With this power in possession, that person may still rebel if he <u>chooses</u>, but he no longer is compelled to do so; he may thoroughly repent and turn completely to righteous living, if he wants to and if he remembers to use the supernatural empowering. Therefore, we are not to forsake assembling together, but should continue to warn and urge and encourage one another all the more faithfully as the Day of the Lord approaches (Heb.10:25). Each Christian <u>can</u> begin living in Christ's righteousness, - if he wishes to do so (IJohn 2:1). Each Christian should do so, for Christ's righteousness is a first thing to be established (Matt.6:33), inasmuch as the fully righteous are barely saved (IPet.4:18), - and then other things can be added.

If in the relatively mild spiritual conflict of this day, a Christian continues to be overcome, what will be his position

when the hordes of Satan converge upon him? If he continues to be overcome while the river of evil and destruction is fairly well contained between embankments, what will he do when the river overflows its banks in a flood (Jer.12:5, Rev.12:15)? Feelings of unworthiness and feelings of inadequacy (I just can't) which prevent our accomplishing God's plan are there because of lack of repentance. This preparation is vitally important and it must reach thoroughly and deeply into the heart; mental recognition is just not adequate. The Holy Spirit must be given lengthy opportunity to settle and deepen the past in our lives until there is no thing remaining that can throw us into a mood, or a withdrawal, or bitterness, or rebellion and cause us to turn off the things of the Lord. This is the only way to a changed life. The Holy Spirit must have full opportunity to enlighten our present so we can constantly be walking with Him. The Holy Spirit must also have full opportunity to direct our future into the way in which we ought to go. Without repentance in depth, there can be no consistency in being what the Lord wants us to be. The attainment of Christian maturity is impossible without repentance in depth, because first the hindrances need to be removed. Only after thorough repentance and dedication can the end-time out-pouring of the Holy Spirit be released to any individual (Joel 1 and 2).

Among His jobs, the Holy Spirit is to guide into all truth (John 16:13) and to illuminate the recognition of sin and of righteousness (John 16:8); therefore, we are to allow the Lord to reason with us (Isa.1:18) that we might depart from unrighteousness (2Tim.2:19) and be His servants (John 8:32-34). We are to invite Him to search our hearts and bring up any wicked thing (Ps.139:23-24) so that the wicked thing can be purged out and blotted out during thorough repentance (a change to walking righteously) and so that a clean heart is created and a right spirit is renewed (Ps.51:6-10). Only then can Jesus Christ exercise His full rule and only then can there be that consistent walk in His righteousness. After that, the other things He expects us to use in an effective reflection of Himself here on earth will be added. First the firm foundation for the house (power and ability to support the house) must be in place, then the frame of the house (His righteousness, - not ours) can be built upon that foundation. Only then and upon these first things can a worthy house be completed which will provide the peace and comfort of full protection from the 'elements' of the Tribulation and its rapidly mounting onslaught of enemy hosts and which will enable a triumphant emergence into the very presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DANIEL'S PROPHECY

FOR TODAY

All of Scripture is given by divine inspiration and is given for our instruction and training into conformity with God's will (2Tim.3:16-17); therefore, the presentation in the chapters of the Book of Daniel is much more than a recounting of history. It is accurate history, in spite of the general concept of many that it contains improbable history, but its more important purpose is to reveal patterns in which God has chosen to operate and to control in that day - and in our day, for God is the same yesterday, today, and always. The acting out of these living dramas on the stage of history was accomplished for our benefit (IPet.1:12-13), although most of the actors did not realize what was being accomplished through them for future generations.

THE TIMES OF THE NATIONS
-Dan. 2-

This revelation of God was first given to the king of Babylon who was a servant of God (Jer.25:9), but who was not an Israelite, nor was he a faithful servant. The dream was about things that would come to pass, about the events at the end of the Ages and about the developments that would lead up to these events (Dan.2:28-29). The literal period of the dream's application extends from Nebuchadnezzar's time (:38) <u>in continuity</u> through the time of Christ's 2nd coming, and into His victory over the powers of the world systems, when He will establish a great Kingdom which will cover all the earth and which will never be destroyed (:44). The whole image pictures the development and consummation of the ages of man's accomplishment in building his own world into our unstable society of 'clay and iron', outside of God's counsel, into a society which is to be crushed into worthless 'chaff' and utterly blown away (:35). When this crushing is completed, only Christians, or predominantly Christians, will remain alive on earth (Isa.13:9, Acts 3:23) and they then become the 'seed' for re-populating the nations on earth during the millenial Kingdom Age.

In the interpretation of the dream given to Daniel, the Babylonian empire was identified as the uppermost or first part of the image, that which began the fulfillment of the time sequencing of the world empires pictured. From other portions of the Book of Daniel and from history, we know that the silver empire following the Babylonian rule was that of Medo-Persia (Dan.8:20), and then came the Grecian empire (Dan.8:21). The 4th empire was that of Rome, which was contemporary with the time of Christ's 1st coming, but which was to extend through its heirs (two legs) into the end of our Age, to then be characterized by the symbolism of iron and clay mingled. Only at the end of the Age in which we live today will this 4th empire be overcome and disappear. The 4th empire is not pictured here as going out of existance and then reappearing at some later date, nor as being succeeded by any other world empire since the days when Rome was the military master of the world around the Mediterranean. Historically and prophetically,

the Roman Empire of 'iron' has been extended into our time through the Holy Roman Empire and its 'daughters', covering a far greater portion of the earth than formerly. True, its character of military accomplishment has in some measure been replaced by other attributes so far, but nonetheless the same 4th empire is shown as being carried on, although we see it now in a somewhat different form.

Each of the historical four empires was said to rule over the whole earth and this was true in the sense that each dominated in the known world, although there were many peoples not under their direct control. Likewise at the end of our Age, when the 4th empire is becoming dominant in the world, there will be many peoples or nations not an integral part of the 'iron' empire; however, in our time all the peoples will be affected by the dominance of the 'iron' empire, for the iron is mixed with the clay - mixed in with the seed of men - and the 'clay' will know of the presence of the 'iron', even if there is an unwillingness to capitulate or submit to the philosophy and governmental pattern of the 'iron' empire.

The image sequence is concluded by the picturing of the feet of the 'iron' empire as the consummating phase of its existance. It is still the 'iron' empire, and within its dominion are pictured 10 toes (rulers and nations), 5 on one leg and 5 on the other leg. As pictured by the image, the pagan Roman Empire divided about 44 BC and later the Holy Roman Empire also became divided, in effect extending the 'iron legs' of the image as western and eastern portions, though both legs are still the same 4th empire of 'iron'. The area of the world under the influence of the two legs of the image was thus expanded far beyond that controlled by military Rome. And then under the 'daughters' of the Holy Roman Empire, those born in the Reformation movement, the area controlled by the 4th empire of 'iron' extended even farther out through the Church-State alliances, and it is from those portions of the world which have come under the influence and extended domination of the 'iron' empire that the 5 rulers in nations of the western leg extension and the 5 rulers in nations of the eastern leg extension will soon emerge to become recognized as the <u>10</u> toes (10 is the number of the gentiles, which will include both nominally Christian nations and Moslem nations, for Moslem nations too have and will come under the influence and dominion of the eastern leg).

However, the end-of-the-Age manifestation of the 'iron' empire will not be limited to a 10 nation confederation. In the Book of Revelation this same 'iron' empire is described as a 'sea-beast' empire in the end time (Rev.13:1-3) which basically has 7 heads (rulers and nations) and also 10 horns (rulers and their nations), but there is also a 'land-beast' empire which is secretly subordinate to the iron or sea-beast empire and which contains, among other nations, the same 7 heads and 10 horns (Rev.13:11-12, 17:3, 11-13). It is in the time of both the 7 heads and 10 horns that the power and authority of Jesus Christ (Dan.2:45, Mk.12:10, IPet.2:4-6) will fall upon all the world systems which man has developed (in an inadvertent partnership with Satan's hosts)

by the agency of a consummating test of world power which other Scripture symbolically describes as the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:15-19, 16:16-17).

The metals symbolically pictured in Nebuchadnezzar's dream can also be seen as types of the earthly and Satanic counterparts of God's symbols for His own work. Gold is a type for the workings in the spirit world and the impartations from it, and denotes spiritual wealth as well as material wealth. Satan had this spiritual wealth from God initially when he was still in God's heaven (Ezek.28:13-15), but in God's plan this 'gold' must be refined and tested (Rev.3:18) before being qualified for His service. Silver indicates less spiritual wealth and pictures a need for God's work of redemption. It is a symbol of God's power to provide redemption, which the world under Satan needed after he disqualified himself for remaining in God's heaven and partaking of refined gold (Ezek.28:16). Brass indicates less spiritual wealth than silver and is used as a type for man's knowledge and philosophy of earthly things (especially that accumulated in the past century), which Satan promotes for rebellion against God. Refined brass or bronze refers to God's knowledge and wisdom (Rev.1:15) which every disciple is to have for cooperating with God (Jas. 1:4-5). The iron typifies an emphasis upon materialism and upon the use of raw power and authority, carnal, ruthless and crushing, as is now so especially evident among the God-rejecting countries of communism. But there is also a refined iron used in Scripture to symbolize God's power to rule in righteousness and love (Rev. 2:26-27). Clay is more earthly than iron, more of man, and indicates the advance of human knowledge in humanism, self-attainment and in the elevation of man through science, technology and learning, - developed without reference to God and developed to replace Him. However, these clay attributes do not mix well with an 'iron' environment of brutal power, so dictatorial rule becomes necessary to regulate those of clay as well as those of iron. But clay also represents weakness which <u>may</u> be presented to the Lord for His action on it, by which He transmutes it into the pattern of Himself (Ro.12:2, 2Cor.3:18). In addition, we see the elements of the iron mingling with the elements of the clay. The word for mingling also bears the meaning of trade or commerce. See the expansion today of trade between the God-rejecting empire of communism and the other countries outside!

About 50 years after Nebuchadnezzar's world power dream, Daniel also had a dream on the same subject but with different symbolizm - that of animals instead of metals. Daniel's dream likewise pictured the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and then Rome with its extension through the time of Christ's 2nd coming. Here Daniel is a representative of the Jewish people and the vision relates to the world empires which become rulers and oppressors of Daniel's people. He first sees the 4 'winds' of the heavens, or spirits (same word as wind) of the atmosphere, stirring up the great 'sea' of the nations (Rev.17:15) with political and social agitations (Dan.7:2). Then 4 animal symbols rise successively out of the sea

of nations (Dan.7:3). The first was like a lion (the Babylonian empire) which initially had God's protective enabling (eagle's wings - Dan.7:3-4, Rev.12:14), but these protecting wings were afterward removed. Then Daniel saw that the lion animal took on the form of a man and was given a man's heart; at a later time, a ruler of that beast power was to become as a man, but without the wings of protection. The symbol of the lion corresponds to the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Then a second animal symbol came into view, like a bear with one shoulder higher than the other (the Medo-Persian empire in which Persia was dominant), and pushed its dominion out toward the west, north and south, - 3 ribs in its mouth (Dan.7:5, 8:4, 20), to assimilate many peoples. The bear symbol corresponds to the shoulders of silver in Dan.2. After this Daniel saw an animal like a leopard (the Grecian empire under Alexander the Great) with 4 wings of a bird (not an eagle) and 4 heads (Alexander's successors - Dan.7:6, 8:8, 21-22). The leopard was pictured as wing-covered, but not by God's protection, for the leopard ruler was to be exceedingly self-centered (Dan.8:8). The leopard symbol corresponds to the thighs of brass or bronze in Dan.2. After this a different animal symbol was raised up, different from all the others, terrible, dreadful, powerful and very strong (the Roman empire and its heirs in the east and the west). It had great iron teeth with which to devour and it crushed and trampled with its feet what it did not devour. It had 10 horns (symbols of 10 rulers) and Daniel saw another horn (ruler), a little one initially, come up from among the 10, overcoming 3 of them and becoming like a man (Dan.7:8). It is the same as Dan.8 horn, coming out of Caspian area of Russia. This little horn will come from one of the four portions of what was Alexander's empire and his power will be great, but not by his own power (Dan.8:22-25). He will honor and submit to the god of fortresses - Lucifer (Dan.11:37). Though he is then like a man, he will magnify himself, with Satan's power against the Prince of the host (Jesus Christ), take away a 'daily' of some sort from Him and cast down and profane God's sanctuary, - a portion of the Body of Christ and its facilities in our time (Dan.8:10-11). The symbol of the dreadful beast corresponds to the iron legs and the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's dream image (the present-day heirs of the east and west parts of the Roman empire), and the 10 horns correspond to the 10 toes on the feet of the image, 5 in the western portion and 5 in the eastern portion. The 'other horn' does not have a corresponding symbol in Nebuchadnezzar's dream image, but when the other horn comes into his power, he will oppose God, will wear down the Body of Christ, will try to change times (probably customs) and the law (God's law for His saints), and he will have an opportunity to work at these things during a period of 3-1/2 years (Dan.7:24-25).

As in Dan.2, this dream given to Daniel has the primary application to the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman (plus its extension) empires which oppress God's people, but we also may see in this a picture of Satan's step-by-step coming closer to losing his own empire, which is held in stewardship. He is the unseen, hidden ruler behind the successive empires in

the world order. His first phase was <u>like</u> a lion, like God in many respects (Ezek.28:12-15, Rev.5:5), and with eagle's wings which God provides (Rev. 12:14). This prophecy in Dan.7: 4, also reveals he will later have a human body by taking it for his use and become as man (Isa.14:16, Ezek.28:2, 9). The next phase is symbolized as a bear which has lesser status than a lion and this phase features the devouring of much flesh (Isa.14:5-6, 12, 17). Some of the power and ruling attributes of the lion phase remain however, for it is written that the devil still roams around <u>like</u> a lion.....seeking someone to devour (IPet.5:8). Then there is the phase of the leopard with wings, picturing the rapid movement into knowledge and philosophy independently of God (usually associated with the Grecian development in the age of its glory). The intellectual attainment is viewed as security (wings) in the four quarters of the world order under Satan's temporary stewardship (Dan.12:4). Then there is the development into a phase featuring the application of brutal, ruthless power and the exercise of authority to crush and trample.

In some measure, this brutality was seen in the early Roman Empire, but in greater measure it has been seen more recently in the rule of Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler, and it will be seen in even a much greater measure when Satan has established himself in a human body (the imitation of what God did in Jesus) as the 'seen' ruler of a world confederation of communism which to an awesome degree will affect all nations on this planet. Satan-incarnate's power and might are based on a foundation of the materialism of man's knowledge built up through technical and scientific advances (feet with brass nails) and exercised in a God-rejecting philosophy of government.

In this interpretation of his vision, Daniel was then given more information about this 4th beast empire. The 4th empire is different than its predecessors and Daniel could only describe it as dreadful. In about 96AD, John saw the same empire in symbolism and described it as part lion, part bear, and part leopard (Rev.13:1-2), one to which Satan gives all his power. The 10 rulers of the Great Tribulation period are to rise out of the geographical area and its extensions that has been under the control of the 4th beast empire and from among them an 11th ruler will come up. The 11th ruler will come later in time than the 10 previous rulers, he will be different from them, and he will overcome and subdue 3 of the 10, though the 10 continue to the end of the Age. This is the 'horn' which shall become like a man (Dan.7:8), Satan incarnated in the human body of a man already in ruling position, and he will match himself against God and against His Body of Christ during a period of 3-1/2 years to wear out the saints. He will seek to change times (probably customs such as holy days and feasts) and the law, but in the contest his dominion will be gradually taken away during the 3-1/2 years, and at the end of the period it will be suddenly destroyed (the outcome of the Battle of Armageddon). The period of 3-1/2 years is that which is called the Great Tribulation (Rev.11:2, 12:6,

13:5, Matt.24:15, 21, Dan.12:1). After the Tribulation, Jesus Christ will begin to establish an 'everlasting' Kingdom for the saints who remain on earth. Almost no persons who have not accepted Jesus will live beyond the sudden destruction (Isa.13:9). It will be the saints who will possess the surviving Kingdom (Dan.7:18, 22, Rev.12:5).

THE COVENANTS WITH ISREAL

It is taught that the 70th week of Daniel 9 is separated from the other 69 by a gap of 2000 years. Is it? Or is this a product of man's interpretation of what 'should have been' in God's mind?

God chose a people in the Old Testament times to be a key to open up and show what He would do on earth. These people were chosen, not because they were better than others, but because God wished their lives to show a pattern of His entire plan through what He would cause to happen to them. First He chose a man, and through that man He fathered a nation. God told Abram, that man of His choosing, to look at the stars; if he could number them, so he would know that progeny or seed which would come from him (Gen.15:5). God also told Abram that his seed would be as the dust of the earth (Gen.13:16). Through these two promises we may understand that the seed of Abraham was to be two-fold, - a physical seed or offspring and a spiritual seed, the physical seed being typified by the dust of the earth and the spiritual seed on earth by the stars of heaven. They who began as the physical seed were to mature into the spiritual seed, but they have not -- yet.

The physical seed came first, being known as the nation of Israel, through Abraham's grandson, Jacob, who fathered the 12 patriarchs who then in turn became the heads and progenitors of the 12 tribes of Israel. These 12 tribes constituted that nation of prophets and priests through whom God revealed Himself and to whom He chose to make known His law. The complete history of the nation of Israel portrays, through living drama, the entirety of God's plan and purpose for the human race. The study of the sacred history from the time of Abram on, reveals numerous types and patterns depicting God's plan of the ages, as well as the nature of His dealings with human beings to bring them to Him and into the stream of His divine purpose for them.

God made certain promises to the nation of Israel in the form of covenants or agreements, and since these promises were contingent upon obedience, God was in no way obligated to keep them when the nation defaulted. But the covenant made with Abram was different, for God swore by Himself that He would fulfill what He had spoken to Abram, because Abram believed God's promises and took action upon them, walking before Him with a perfect heart (Gen.22:16-17, Heb.6:13-18). Therefore, what God promised to do through Abram's offspring was not subject to change; however, since the promises were to Abram and to his seed, it was completely within God's perogative to transfer the promises from the physical seed to the spiritual seed (Gal.3:7, 29).

This was demonstrated by prophetic type in Jacob's experience at the river Jabbok

(Gen.32:22-32), where as he wrestled with the angel, his name was changed from Jacob to Israel. Jacob's wrestling with the angel symbolizes a spiritual experience in which the carnal gives way to the mind of the Spirit and an energizing is made available to do the will of God, a supernatural enabling to replace the 'old nature' with the 'new nature'. This is also signified by the name Jabbok, which means outpouring. As in the type, God pours out His Spirit on all those who have seen His provision for a walk of victory in the Spirit, rather than struggling in the flesh, and the name Israel (meaning prince with God) then comes into operation with the transfer to a more spiritual condition. The principle of transference to the spiritual counterpart is also pictured by the fact that Jacob (meaning supplanter) replaced or supplanted his brother Esau as the birthright holder after Esau had 'sold out' and despised his birthright. The name Esau means hairy, indicating the earthly or carnal man, and that name was later changed to Edom (meaning red) which links him to the earth from which physical man was formed. Thus Esau becomes a type of all the unregenerate human race, even the descendants of Abraham, and Jacob-Israel is the type of the spirit-born man, the new creature who replaces the old man of sin. These prophetic events in type are designed to emphasize the truth that the physical seed of Abraham would eventually be replaced by the spiritual seed. Jesus made this a reality when He said to those who boasted of their descent from Abraham, 'The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a gathering of people who will bring forth its fruits (Matt.21:43), to a Kingdom of priests' (Rev.1:5-6).

The natural or physical people of Israel have been preserved through the years, not by virtue of the covenant God made with them as a nation, but simply because of the word which He gave to Abram, confirmed by His oath. The covenant made at Sinai with the 12 tribes was broken and is no longer in force. Because they broke the agreement, God scattered the peoples of natural Israel into the nations, causing them to be cut off and absorbed into the gentile world, - with one exception. That exception was the preserved remnant of the southern Kingdom of Judah which was re-established in the promised land so that there might be a people to receive the Messiah and to fulfill all the things written in the Scriptures. It was God's mercy and forgiveness that made possible their return from captivity to be preserved until the coming of the Messiah, and the measure of this forgiveness and its prophetic equation was given to the disciples in answer to Peter's question concerning forgiveness (Matt.18:21-22). The answer expressed the essence of that which God had been willing to do, even as He requested the same of the disciples, for He would not require of man what He would not be willing to fulfill Himself. Peter asked if seven times would be sufficient in forgiving his brother and Jesus told him that it should rather be seventy times seven. The number given conveyed the idea of completeness of forgiveness, with no animosity retained within the heart, and also conveyed the idea of complete or continuous forgiveness whenever true repentance (the act of turning to righteousness)

is manifested, without limitation as to the number of times.

But also veiled in Jesus' answer was the declaration of God's grace toward an erring nation, showing the extent of His mercy to that remnant which was given permission to return to the promised land and to rebuild the temple. After numerous difficulties, the returned remnant finally began the reinstituted sacrifices on a regular and continuous basis. From the time that the sacrificial rights were reinstituted until the time that the Messiah was cut off was exactly 70 times 7, or 490 years, and thus did the Lord proclaim the extent of His grace and forgiveness after permitting the remnant to return. At the close of that 490 years, the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which provided the foundation for all grace and forgiveness, was offered once for all time. The 490 years measured the extent to which God's forgiveness would be granted to the returned remnant, based on their reinstituted animal sacrifices. Beyond that 490 years there could be no forgiveness, except on the grounds of the perfect sacrifice of the promised Messiah giving Himself as the all-sufficient expiation for the sins of the world. The continuance of the animal sacrifices by the unbelieving Jewish people beyond the stipulated time period, in complete rejection of the one all-sufficient sacrifice, constituted the abomination for which the nation and the temple were made desolate (Dan.9:27). From that time on, those who continued the animal sacrifices fulfilled the prophetic words of Isaiah to the effect that he who kills an ox will be guilty as if he killed a man for sacrifice; he who sacrifices a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he who presents an offering, as if it were swine's blood; he who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. They have chosen <u>their own</u> ways and their soul delights in their abominations or despicable things. They did evil before My eyes and chose that in which I do not delight (Isa.66: 3-4). Because of their abominations, they were broken as a people and scattered, remaining in exile and unfruitful for an entire age. But again, because of God's oath to Abraham, He has preserved a remnant of the Jews throughout this age and will yet deal with them.

The 490 year period from the re-establishment of the sacrifices to the establishment of the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ is not the only use of 70 sevens in Scripture, for the 490 year period is also a pattern which the Lord chooses to use again and again. Our Lord is the same in the past, the present and the future. There was a 490 year period from the time Abram entered the land of Canaan to the time the Israelites entered Canaan. There was a 490 year period from the time of the rule over the Israelites by the Pharoah who did not know Joseph to the time of the rule of their next king, Saul. There was a 490 year period from the rule of the new king, Saul, to the rule of the new line of kings over the land of Palestine, starting with Nebuchadnezzar. There was also a 490 year period from the time of dedicating Solomon's temple to the dedication of the rebuilt temple after the remnant returned from Babylon.

Note that in each of these 490 year periods there was a continuity of time right up to the completion of the period; in none of them is found a discontinuity or a portion of the period set apart for later fulfillment. Each of the periods began with the initiation of a new thing or a change bringing about a new phase, and each extended without interruption to its end and to a beginning of a new phase of the same subject matter. We need to note this typical characteristic, because there is another 490 year period appearing in the prophecy of Daniel 9, which must be interpreted according to the other paralleling patterns given in Scripture.

-DAN. 9-

In about 538 BC, Daniel knew it was almost God's time for completion of the 70 year exile in Babylon, because Jeremiah had prophecied the exile would extend over a period of 70 years (Jer. 25:11-12, 29:10). The first attack on the city of Jerusalem and the deportation of many of its inhabitants was about 606 BC, but the temple was not destroyed until a second seige about 586 BC. Therefore, the release of those of Judah to return to Jerusalem was due in about 536 BC and the rebuilding of the temple was due to be completed about 516 BC. There was a 70 year span for the exile and there was a 70 year span (with a 20 year offset) to the completion of the temple. Daniel also knew that his own people had been cast out of their own land, because they sinned against God prior to the exile period and he knew they continued to displease Him during the exile period. As later became more evident, the people took up the patterns of the Babylonians and became comfortable there; there were but a few, a remnant, who desired to leave Babylon and return to Judah. Because of their diffidence, Daniel was moved and inspired to intercede in the behalf of his nation. There had been no repentance by the nation, no turning <u>from</u> what displeased the Lord and no turning <u>to</u> what would please Him, and Daniel confessed this as a representative of and as an intercessor for the nation in exile, with prayer and supplications, with fasting, and with sack-cloth and ashes (Dan. 9:3-4, IJohn 1:9). His prayer of specific confession and request for forgiveness included himself, although Daniel had been walking in a way pleasing to God, because he was a member of that body of Jews which was participating in sin. This is one of the several examples in Scripture of the effectiveness of a vicarious repentance by a person living a life 'sold out' to Yahweh-Jesus, but he could only repent as one member of the nation. He rightly calls attention to the fact that evil is permitted to come upon those who persist in turning away from God (ICor.5:1-5) and his only basis for requesting forgiveness and grace is for 'Your own sake, O my Gods (Elohim), because Your city and Your people are called by Your name' (Dan.9:19). Here ~~is~~ in this record, a very useful pattern is presented for our application today (2Tim. 3:16).

Daniel immediately received an answer to his effective praying, even while he was still speaking (Matt.6:8). And according to Gabriel's revealing to Daniel, there was to be another

period of 70 units connected with God's plan for Judah, though this one was to be a 70 times 7 period (Dan.9:24). This prophetic word was to be specifically tied to God's dealings with the Jewish people and with Jerusalem during a period of 70 times 7, or 490 years. In Dan.9:24, the words 'determined or decreed' upon your people means 'especially set aside or cut out' for your people. The offer being made was to bring a finishing (lit. restraining) of the transgression of His people so His plan could continue to develop (Isa.53:5), to seal up and make full the measure of sin (Isa. 53:6, 10), to purge away and make expiation and reconciliation for sin, ie: the iniquity not covered by the law, to bring in everlasting righteousness, (the nucleus of it is the Seed of Christ - Isa. 54:17), and to seal up (fulfill) the vision and the prophet (what he reported), and to anoint a most holy something, the Holy of Holies (Jesus Christ, also the Christian dispensation). In other words, this offer was intended to bring into effect a new rule in the chosen land so it could then become a pattern and a living exhibit of the Lord's intent and objective for all lands. But it was to be presented as an offer (as is always God's way) and therefore was not to automatically come into effect independently of its acceptance or rejection. The offer, as was each of the offers to the chosen nation, was to be conditional and provisional. Here again we see 2 sides of the 'coin' --the promises, but also the conditions; it would be presented as a contractual agreement, but would only become a firm contract when the chosen people, or a minimum number of them, accepted the terms of the offer. This same approach is consistent in every one of the offers previously made to this chosen nation.

The 70 weeks in Dan.9:24 were originally written as '70 sevens', not 70 weeks. The 70 times 7 would be 490, which is to be translated into prophetic time (Ezek.4:6), and thereby we obtain the 490 years of which Gabriel spoke. This 490 year period, following the pattern of the previous 490 year parallels, would bring the re-establishment of Jerusalem and Palestine into God's plan and a release from the hindering of Satan and his agents. Initially, these developments were to be specifically tied to God's dealings with Jerusalem and the Jewish people, the nation of Israel, - no others. The period was to start at the time of a commandment (Hebrew: 'a word') to restore and re-establish Jerusalem, not just the temple in this instance, and was to extend into the coming of the Anointed One and then through 7 more years of His ministry (Dan.9:25-27), thus completing the 490 year period. The decree or 'word' was to bring about the building of Jerusalem with walls (Hebrew: ramparts) which provide protection, such as a wall and moat, and streets (Hebrew: broad wide place) or square, in troublous times. According to our records, these are the commandments and letters that were issued:

Cyrus, about 536 BC.(2 Chron. 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-2. A proclamation (Hebrew: a voice to go out over), and also writing, to rebuild the temple.

The Lord to Haggai, about 520 BC. (Haggai 1). A prophetic command to resume building the temple.

Xerxes I to Esther, about 473 BC (Esther 8:10). A

written letter and command (a word) effecting deliverance for the Jews from Haman's intentions.

Artaxerxes to Ezra, about 460 BC (Ezra 7:13). An enabling for the 2nd expedition to Jerusalem. It is said this was a written decree (Hebrew: discretion, taste) stating that all Israel may go, giving permission to exercise free will. Not all did go.

Artaxerxes to Nehemiah, about 445 BC (Neh.2:8). Letters to provide beams for the gates of the fortress (in the wall), and material for the city's wall and for the house Nehemiah would enter or occupy. The builders had to work on the walls and gates with sword in hand (Neh.4:18), for the building was done in troublous times.

Which is the commandment prophesied in Dan.9:25?

The time to the Anointed One was 7 plus 62 sevens, which total 483 years, but first we must explore the kind of year which is used by the Lord in this prophecy. The year we use today is the earth's orbit around the sun in 365-1/4 days, but is that the same as God's year or that orbit time in effect before sin affected and infected our planet? There have always been 12 months, that number is one of God's numbers, but Rev.11:2 and Rev.13:5 speak of 42 months, a period in which Rev.11:3 and Rev.12:6 tell us there are precisely 1260 days. In Rev.12:14 and Dan.7:25, this period of 42 months or 1260 days is a period of 3-1/2 years. The numbering of 1260 days and also 42 months in 3-1/2 years is particularly interesting, since within every 3 year period of the Hebrew calendar there is an extra month added to adjust the pattern of the months to the equator's declination relative to the sun and to keep the same months in the same seasons of the year. There is also reference to a period of 5 months containing 150 days in Gen.7:11, 24 and 8:3-4, but this alone shows no special difference from the Hebrew calendar. However, these examples do indicate an even 360 days within what could be termed the sin-free orbit around the sun, and in many comparisons of Bible prophecy with archeological findings, the 360 day year appears to be the one used by the Lord in His plans.

If we are reading this rightly as indicating a very slight shift in earth's orbit when rebellion entered, because all of this portion of God's creation was affected (Ro.8:19-22), the 7 plus 62 sevens (483) years of the 360 day variety, concluding with the appearance of the Anointed One, would be 476 of our 365-1/4 day years. If Jesus Christ was born in about 1 AD, as much evidence now seems to indicate, He was anointed for the beginning of His ministry near the end of 32 AD (Lk.3:21-23). The date 476 years prior to His anointing would reach back to 445 or 444 BC, which would be the date of the 'word' or decree of Dan.9:25, if there is no error in the observations. Historians have fixed the date on which the letters were given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes as 445 BC; however, let it be noted that historical dates back to 1500 BC are subject to a possible error of as much as 10 years.

After the 7 plus 62 sevens of years, the Anointed One was to be cut off and have nothing to Him, having given up everything

(including His close relationship with His Father) on the cross, and this time was fulfilled early in 36 AD, 3-1/2 years after the anointing. Also after the 7 plus 62 sevens of years, a people following another leader who shall come will destroy the city and the sanctuary (John 14:30). This portion of the prophecy foresaw the Anointed One being rejected and cut off (Jesus was also the 'Temple'), and the outcome of the rejection - once it had been confirmed beyond recall - would later result in the destruction of the city and the sanctuary. The fulfillment of His being cut off came into effect with the nation of Israel rejecting the person of Jesus Christ and His being crucified, but the nation's opportunity to accept Him was continued through His apostles and disciples until the time of Stephen's death. Beyond that time late in 39 AD, there was no longer any offering of that ministry to the nation through its leaders, but only to willing individuals in the nation (Acts 8:1). The opportunity presented to these individuals in natural Israel continued during a total of 40 years (a significant number in Scripture) from the beginning of Christ's ministry to its termination in 70 AD, when the non-Christian army of pagan Rome surrounded Jerusalem, took and burned it on the Passover, including the temple, killed tens of thousands and deported about 100,000 of its citizens (Lk.21:20-24). The initial fulfillment was for Israel, but the final fulfillment yet to take place for the nations of spiritual Israel will be associated with another surrounding and then desolation of Jerusalem and Palestine by the armies of the anti-Christ, Satan incarnated in the human body of the ruler of the dreadful beast, world-wide empire now developing, - a ruler who shall come. That latter desolation shall come with a flood of evil from Satan, the serpent (Rev.12:15), and from that time to the end of the Age will be continuous war and desolation for all the nations on earth (Lk.21:22, Rev.12:17, Matt. 24:22, Nah.1:5-8). Obviously, the prophetic period of 70 sevens or 490 years for natural Israel and Jerusalem would have terminated in 39 AD, which is consistent with the time when the New Testament or New Covenant ministry became no longer available to the nation of Israel through its leaders.

Now let us take a careful look at Dan.9:27 solely on the basis of what we can discover in Scripture, for this verse is widely interpreted out of context. The first application of the prophecy is to the people of the Jewish nation and to Jerusalem (:24), though the final application includes spiritual Israel (the Kingdom on earth) and Jerusalem (Christendom) by inescapable inference. The primary subject in the prophecy is the work and person of the Anointed One, Jesus Christ (:24-26), although a single reference is made to the people of another leader (:26). In verse :27, the prophecy continues, stating that He, the Messiah of :26, shall confirm (Hebrew: strengthen) a covenant or testament or agreement with many for one seven or 7 years, - with the Jewish people (:24). Whatever covenant this was to be was one which must already have been in existance with the Jewish people, for it was one which was to be strengthened. From the record of our New Testa-

ment, we know that Jesus, beginning with His baptism by the Holy Spirit in the river Jordan (Matt. 3:16, and a little later with the anointing by His Father (Lk.4:18, John 17:3, 6:46, 62, 3:13), presented a strengthened covenant, entirely consistent with earlier covenants to that nation, which the nation was free to accept or reject. The 69 'weeks' reached to the anointing, so the Messiah's ministry began at the initiation of the 70th 'week'. But the prophecy of :27 places a time limit on the offer of the strengthened covenant to the Jewish nation, terminating 7 years beyond its initial offering. All of God's previous covenants offered to this nation were contingent upon obedience and all were defaulted by the nation's lack of response, yet the nation had been preserved, because of God's unconditional promise to Abram confirmed by His oath (Heb.6:13-18). Therefore, it was necessary that God again offer the nation an opportunity for accepting Yahweh-Jesus as <u>their</u> Messiah and for re-establishing His rule or Kingdom. Jeremiah was given prophecy on this necessity to the effect that, although old covenants had been broken by Israel, a new covenant would be offered precisely like that of the New Testament ministry, and would be offered first to the Jewish nation, - which was fulfilled during a period of 7 years (Jer. 31:27-34, Heb.8:6-13). This new covenant was to result in a substantially strengthened relationship between the Jewish nation and God, <u>if</u> it was accepted, and it was to terminate as did its predecessors, if it was not accepted (Zech.11:10-14). The Messiah was to be cut off in death <u>after</u> the 69 'weeks', placing the crucifixion sometime <u>during</u> the 70th 'week' (after the 70th week had been well started) and making it impossible for the 70th 'week' to be separated from the 69 'weeks' and to be placed at the end of the Age. See the bankruptcy of man's theology and interpretation. The first fulfillment of the 70th 'week' has taken place, but it does not preclude some kind of additional fulfillment in our time. In the early part of His ministry, Jesus Himself acted out the 7 year pattern during the Feast of Tabernacles, especially for the benefit of the leaders of the nation who claimed to know the Scriptures so thoroughly (2Tim.3:16). He presented the New Covenant and He warned them to accept it, or it would be withdrawn (John 7:1, 10, 11, 14, 33, 34, 37). The Feast of Tabernacles celebrated the beginning of a new period, the civil new year, and this was so appropriate for the parable drama being presented. While present at the week-long Feast, He pictured His own ministry. During the first 3-1/2 days He worked among them almost incognito and veiled from the sight of most of the people, but He was there for those who would search Him out (Isa.42:1-9). At mid-week He placed Himself boldly before them, rulers and all, and on the concluding day He completed the drama by a strong invitation to come to Him, - the final invitation during the 7 days (Isa.42:4). A similar drama will play by again in our generation. At another time, Jesus also pictured the limited time for the offer of His strengthened covenant in the parable of the vineyard fig tree (a symbol of the nation of Israel)

in which the owner of the fig tree had been looking for fruit from it for 3 years (Lk.13:6-9). The tree deserved cutting down, but the vine dresser persuaded the owner to allow him to dig around it and fertilize it another season to see if subsequently it would bear fruit. If it did not bear fruit <u>after</u> the additional attention, then the fig tree would be cut down and taken out (Matt.21:43). After His resurrection, when the disciples asked Jesus if this was now the time at which He would re-establish the Kingdom and restore it to Israel (Acts 1:6-8), Jesus would not and could not announce that this was not the time and that the time would have to be deferred, because the offer to the Jewish nation had not yet expired, it had 3-1/2 years yet to run before the nation's rejection of Him would be final.

Jesus Himself was given to be that stronger covenant to the people of Israel and through them to be a light to the nations, but before the new things spring forth God tells of them (Isa.42:6-9). Jesus was foretold to be the messenger or angel of the covenant who was to suddenly come to His temple (Mal.3:1). Jesus Christ is the mediator of a new agreement (Heb. 9:14-15), and He came with the intention of carrying out His Holy covenant which He sealed by oath to Abraham (Lk.1:72-73). Jesus was a minister to the Jews of the truth of God to <u>confirm</u> and add to the promises made to the fathers (Ro.15:8).

Jesus did away with the old order under a defaulted covenant which involved symbolic sacrifices and offerings so that He might inaugurate the new and establish the second order in which He Himself became the once-for-all sacrifice for atonement and for righteousness (2Cor.3:14, Heb. 10:6-10). Gabriel prophecied that He will cause the sacrifice and the offering necessary for approaching God to cease (Dan. 9:27), which Jesus Christ did by the sacrifice of His own life at the mid-point of the final 7 of the 70 sevens. He completed and fulfilled the meaning of all Old Testament symbolic sacrifices and washings which pointed forward to Him and His enabling sacrifice to fill up their prophetic picture, and He brought the reality in place of the acted out dramas in parable previews. Although Jesus knew the nation would reject Him and His astounding ministry, He did not once withdraw the confirming of this strengthened covenant with many, those of the Jewish nation, during the whole 7 year period. If no one else is faithful, God remains faithful and true, never reneging on His promises (Ro.3: 3-4). Even after the crucifixion, He continued to present the firm offer to the rulers of the nation by His Holy Spirit through the apostles and disciples, - up to the murder of Stephen in 39 AD which brought the 490 year prophetic period to a close for Jerusalem and for the Jewish nation. After His resurrection, Jesus instructed the apostles and disciples to continue to present His strengthened covenant to Jerusalem and Israel, beginning with the requirement of deep repentance so that all of sin could be forgiven and erased (Lk.24: 45-47). Subsequently and until the time of Stephen's death, the Jewish nation and its leaders heard the offer being proclaimed, but on that day a great and severe persecution broke out against the Church in Jerusalem which ef-

fectively scattered that group, forcing it out of contact with the government of the Jewish nation. The Apostles remained in Jerusalem to work with and encourage interested individuals in the region, but the period in which the nation as a nation could enter into the strengthened contract offer had expired (Acts 7:57-60, 8:1).

To help in weighing and establishing the validity of the foregoing interpretation of these Dan.9 verses, let us quickly review the focus of them. The primary subject of 9:24 is the work of Jesus Christ; that of :25 is the person of Jesus Christ; and that of :26 is the crucifixion death of Jesus Christ after His anointing for ministry. Verse 27 gives a bold declaration of the vicarious atonement which would be accomplished by the promised Messiah. In the midst or middle of the 70th week, He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation (of the Mosaic ordinance) to cease. There was no further need for the animal sacrifices of the law to continue, after Jesus had appeared in order to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and was once offered to bear the sins of many (Heb.9:26, 28). The Messiah was to be cut off, but not for Himself; His atonement was for others and its placement in time was at the middle of the final or 70th 'week'. Since 70 full 'weeks' were set aside for the people (:24), the Jews had only 3-1/2 years after the crucifixion of Christ in which to repent and accept their Messiah, or once again be subject to the judgment of God and eventually suffer again being cast out of the promised land. Through the preaching of the Apostles, the Jews were clearly given an opportunity for <u>national</u> repentance, even though they had crucified their Messiah (Acts 3:12-26). Such repentance would have brought refreshing from the presence of the Lord and restitution to the nation (2Chron.7:14). However, there was complete rejection of the Apostle's testimony by the Jewish rulers and elders, and Stephen, under the power of the Holy Spirit, declared them to be stubborn and uncircumcised and always resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51).

The rejection of the Messiah by the Jews and their subsequent continuance of the animal sacrifices was an abomination in the sight of God, for which desolation was determined upon their land. Because of the overspreading (literally, extensions) of abominations, He (the Messiah) shall make desolate (the city and sanctuary of :26), even until the full determined end shall be poured upon the desolate (land). It became impossible for God to 'delight' in the continuance of animal sacrifices, once their function had been terminated by Christ's perfect sacrifice of Himself. Therefore, when the Jews continued them in rejection of Christ's sacrifice, they became that abomination in the sight of God of which Isaiah prophecied (Isa.65:1-7, 66:3-4).

The 70 'weeks' allotted to the Jews was to run consecutively, without the final or 70th 'week' being separated from the 69 and relegated exclusively to a future time. Daniel was shown that the allotted 70 'weeks' would see the fulfillment of certain things through the ministry of the promised Anointed One (Dan.

9:24). In that ministry during the 70th 'week', six things were to take place. 1) To finish or fill up the transgression (literally, restrain transgression of the Law). This Jesus did, but the Jews filled up the transgression by crucifying Jesus and also by killing those He sent (Matt.23:32-36). 2) To make an end of sins not covered specifically by the Law. Jesus made an end of sins, by dying on the cross (Heb. 9:26). 3) To make reconciliation for iniquity. This was fulfilled by Jesus in reconciling the whole world to Himself (2Cor.5:19). 4) To bring in everlasting righteousness. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus brought in everlasting righteousness - a seed nucleus of utter righteousness (Ro.3:21-22, 2Cor.5:21, IPet.1:23). 5) To seal up the vision and prophecy. To 'seal up' means to finish or fulfill or fill up, and Jesus did so fulfill (Acts 3:18, Lk.16:16). 6) To anoint the most Holy. After His baptism in the Jordan, the Most Holy (Jesus) was anointed (John 1:32, Matt.3:16, Lk.3:22, 4:18-22, Lk.4:18). All these things took place during the 70th 'week'.

It would have been strange, most strange, if this prophecy given to Daniel did not refer to the wonderful and exceedingly merciful new covenant which Jesus would offer and make available for possession to Daniel's people during a 7 year period, especially since so much of the Old Testament brings a focus on this specific objective of God in His chosen people, - for the Jewish people first, if they would, and then for the nations. Additionally, there is no paralleling precedent in other Scriptures to indicate a break in this particular 490 year period and a deferment of the 70th seven for 2000 years until the end of the Church Age, nor do I think we dare propagate this teaching without a confirming word in Scripture, for every word of truth must be established by two or three testimonies or patterns in the Word of God (John 8:17, 2Cor.13:1).

Thus we can understand that the 490 years of God's extended grace to the Jews found its consummation in the ministry of the promised Messiah and those whom He commissioned and sent out (John 20:21). Jesus was annointed for His ministry of 3-1/2 years at the beginning of the 70th 'week', the final 'week' of 7 years. The middle of that 'week' saw the rejection of His personal ministry by the Jews. It is inconceivable that there would be a more embracing or more pointed abomination than that God's chosen nation, which He had continually blessed and disciplined in great patience and which He protected even through hateful rebellions, should absolutely refuse to accept the strengthened covenant He offered to enable the people of that nation to overcome all evil so they could become an example to show the way to the world, and should utterly reject their Creator, making Him a cursed sacrifice. Even after He became the once-for-all sacrifice and propitiation for all the world, that nation completely ignored the great Gift of God, fought against Him and His followers, and smugly continued to offer animal sacrifices ostensibly to the same God whom they had blasphemed.

The end of the 'week' con-

cluded with the Jews rejecting the witness of the Holy Spirit's testimony. Although the destruction and desolation of the nation did not come until 70 AD, the end of their probation period of 490 years had come, and the age-long judgment was certain. In 70 AD, the people of the prince (the Roman armies) came and destroyed the city and the sanctuary (the temple). The end was to come by being cut off by desolations (Lk.21:20-21). In its preliminary application, the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place (Palestine) was the presence of the Roman armies in siege against Jerusalem (Matt. 24:15-16). Upon the extension of abominations (despicable things) shall be desolation, until the full determined end is poured out on the desolated land (Dan.9:27).

A great deal of other prophecy in Old and New Testaments tells in some detail that Satan, the desolator (Isa.14:6, 17), and his active and passive followers will also see destruction poured out on them (Ezek.28:7-9, Isa.13:9, Rev.19:19-21). When the great abomination of continued symbolic sacrifice became fact, a succession of developments under the guidance of Satan swiftly began to envelop the Jewish nation, and then spread from that center to all nations (Lk.18:8, Rev.12:9). The one who makes desolate immediately came in to fill the vacuum left by the rejection of Christ and that one is to stay until a full determined end is also poured out on him.

The rejection of Jesus Christ and then of His ministries by the Jewish nation resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, as prophecied by Christ (Lk.19:41-44), 40 years after the initial offer of the strengthened covenant, and resulted in a subsequent removal of that nation from the land. By the rejection of the Messiah throughout the 7 year offering period, the Jewish nation defaulted and has received no replacement covenant or testament with the Lord to this date. The Jews ceased to be a nation and even now, as a nation again, they have no national covenant with the Lord, - just as none of the other 'faiths' have any established relationship with God. But the natural sons of Abraham do have the unconditional promises given him in the Old Testament and repeated as the sure mercies to David (2Sam.7:8-16, Ps.89:20-37). Therefore, God will reinstate His contract offer when the Jewish nation, the remnant that is then left, qualifies by specifically asking Jesus Christ to function as its Messiah (Matt. 23:38-39). This will come after almost 2000 years of there being no contract with that people who are pictured as Abraham's seed which is as the dust of the earth (Gen.13:16).

Although many words have been written here to show the continuity in fulfillment of the entire 70 'weeks' of Daniel, most Scriptures have more than one application and fulfillment. In about 445 BC Daniel's people heard a call to come out of Babylon and return to Jerusalem (the dwelling place of peace). A few responded - it was far from all responding. In this instance also, we may see an additional application and fulfillment during the final 7 years of the present dispensation, but in quite a different way than the Bible fundamentalists see it. In the first fulfillment,

it was an act of God that caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease, wasn't it? Through the death of Jesus and His resurrection, His sacrifice, it was caused to cease, and this was in the middle of the final 'week' of 7 years. If we are to see a fulfillment in the same pattern during the final 7 years of the present dispensation, there should be an act of God in the middle of that final 'week' which would signal the end right then of a completion of a spiritual sacrifice, and offering, and which would elevate those involved in that sacrifice, even as Jesus was elevated or glorified following the completion of His sacrifice.

The Psalmist gives us insight. "Gather My saints to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" (Ps.50:1-5). A first-fruits to God and to the Lamb is now laying all upon the altar as a living sacrifice (Ro.12:1), following the Lamb wherever He goes - cooperating in carrying out His thoughts and His plan (Rev.14:4). When the time comes for their being called up higher, through translation and glorification just before the final 3-1/2 years of Great Tribulation, then it can be truly said that their sacrifice and offering to God will have ceased. They will then begin their service to the Lord on the higher plane of glorified life. When Jesus completed His earthly sacrifice and came forth from the grave to glorified life in the middle of Daniel's 70th 'week', during that initial application, He was the firstfruits of them that slept (ICor.15:20). Similarly, when the anointed 144,000 group is translated and glorified while living, in the middle of the 70th 'week' in its end-time and final application, those will be the firstfruits of the living (ICor.15:23). There is thus no conflict in perceiving that many prophetic Scriptures have more than one application and fulfillment.

Then there is another sense in which sacrifice and offering will cease after the firstfruits are translated. We can read in Acts 17:30 that God overlooks times of ignorance, and Peter, speaking to the Jews in the temple, suggests, rightly or wrongly, that it was through ignorance of the common people that they crucified their Messiah (Acts 3:15-17). But after His resurrection, when there was incontrovertable evidence that He was alive and had triumphed over the grave, there was no further excuse for a claim of ignorance and they were commanded to repent (Acts 3:19-21). It shall be much the same in the day when the firstfruits are elevated in translation. The world will have been given concrete evidence of the truth of the Bible and of a living Christ. Ignorance, because of the apostasy of the church systems, will be utterly inexcusable - there is no good excuse now (Ro.1:19-20). The firstfruits translation will be God's signal to the church systems that their dead denominational and sectarian ways, as well as their man-made doctrines and traditions, are to Him as the 'extension of abominations' for which judgment must come (Dan.9:27, IPet.4:17). That which they thought was acceptable as a 'sacrifice and offering', in their ignorance and blindness, must cease, because with the manifestation of the glorified sons of God and the mighty outpouring of His Spirit which will shortly follow, the

new era will begin. Spiritual refreshing and restitution will come to all who will repent and humble themselves before the Lord, refusing to perpetuate the previous church concepts and ways (Acts 3:19-21). Similarly as the Jews had just 3-1/2 years remaining after the death and glorification of Jesus for accepting Him as their promised Messiah and King, so will the world have just 3-1/2 years after the glorification of the firstfruits to turn to the Lord Jesus as Savior and to get ready for the returning King. Thank God, eyes are beginning to be opened now and some are beginning to enter into the new thing He is doing. As with Lazarus, the Lord is taking away the 'napkin of blindness' which has been around our eyes, and we are being loosed from the 'grave clothes' of our old ways of thinking and traditions (John 11:43-45).

However, God's program of development was not stopped because of the refusal of the first chosen people to participate in it. Because the Jewish nation would not prepare for bringing people of all nations into the strengthened covenant, our Lord started a new thing specifically among individuals of the other nations who would be willing to become spiritual sons of Abraham. God did not leave Himself without a witness in the world, nor can His purposes be frustrated. When there was the contract default on the part of the preserved remnant of Abraham's physical seed during the ministry of Jesus the Messiah, He brought His replacement factor into operation and the Kingdom mantle was lifted from the Jews and given to the spiritual heirs of promise, fulfilling the declaration made by Jesus (Matt.21:42-45). Then, in accord with many prophecies, the Gentiles received the gospel witness and began to bring forth fruit, while the Jewish fig tree remnant remained cursed and unfruitful (Mk.11:12-14, 20-21). Throughout our present Age, the Gentiles are having their opportunity, because the promises to Abraham's seed after the flesh have been transferred to Abraham's seed according to the Spirit. A new 'Israel' is functioning in the dynamic of Abraham's faith (Ro.4:16, Gal.3:13-14, 29), natural Israel having been temporarily shunted into the background until the close of the Age, when once again that nation shall become prominent in God's work (Matt.23:37-39).

Israel after the flesh consisted of 12 tribes, each of which had an inheritance in the promised land. The Levites made up a 13th tribe, having no inheritance in the land, but receiving a special place as God's servants among all the people. Joseph, the birthright holder, had a double inheritance through his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. After the reign of Solomon, the Kingdom was divided. Ten tribes followed Jereboam and two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, remained loyal to Reheboam, Solomon's son. Because of the defection of Jereboam and because of the 10 tribes taking on idolatry, the Levites migrated to Judah so that they might continue to minister as the custodians of the law and the temple. Remnants of most of the other tribes also migrated to the southern Kingdom of Judah so that they might remain true to the God of their fathers. Thus the spiritual elements were si-

phoned off from the 10 tribes, making their plunge into apostasy even more rapid. Only the voices of certain prophets, who were raised up at times, momentarily stemmed the tide into complete idolatry.

Ten is the number of the Gentiles who stem from Noah, the 10th from Adam. By type and by historical pattern, the 10 northern tribes became symbolic of gentile Christendom which progressively also has become steeped in idolatry. In the spirit of prophecy, Isaiah spoke of the territory around the sea of Galilee as 'Galilee of the nations' (Isa.9:1). After the deportation of the 10 tribes into the land of Assyria, their territory became occupied by gentile peoples and was never fully Israel territory again. Even after the return of a remnant of the southern Kingdom of Judah (known as the Jews), many of whom migrated to the northern area, it was never free of gentile influence and domination, except for an interlude beginning in 1948. Furthermore, after the 10 tribes were deported to Assyria, they were eventually absorbed into the gentile world and lost to history, as far as any separate identity is concerned. Restoration became impossible when Yahweh cast them off and gave them a bill of divorce (Jer.3:6-8). Since His own law declared that a man could not remarry a woman whom he had divorced, it became impossible for Yahweh to receive them back into covenant relationship (Deut. 24:1-4). Not until His death in Jesus Christ could the conditions of banishment be reversed and reconciliation made possible through death to the old and resurrection to the new (Ro. 7:1-4). The prophet Hosea testified that in the place where it is said to them, "You are not My people, there it shall be said to them, You are the children of the living God." (Hos.1:10-11). This was a prophetic declaration that many of the descendents of the 10 tribes, having lost their identity and living in the gentile world, would receive the glad tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ and would become the children of God through Him (John 1:12), also becoming a part of the 'new Israel' of the Spirit.

The history of the southern Kingdom of Judah was entirely different. Judah was not then divorced and cut off, even though taken into captivity. A remnant was permitted to return in preparation for the Messiah. However, after Judah's rejection of the Messiah and the blatant denial of His vicarious atonement by continuing to sacrifice animals to God, they were divorced and cut off and their land was made desolate and they were scattered among the nations. Nevertheless, they were not absorbed into the gentile nations as were the northern tribes, but they have retained their distinctive identity down through the years. For this reason, those of Judah are the only identifiable portion of the physical seed of Abraham and, even though there has been much inter-marriage with other peoples among them, the Lord has promised to clean their blood (Joel 3:20-21).

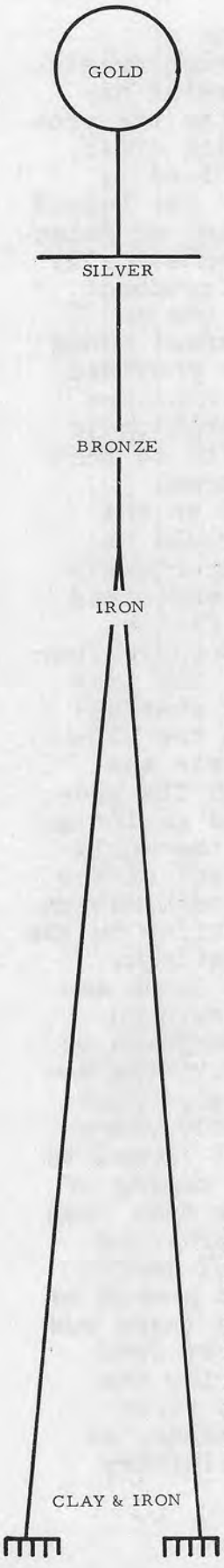
When Judah turned down the strengthened contract terms offered by Jesus Christ, He transferred the tendered contract terms to a people among the nations which would choose to become a 'replacement Israel'. He

did this so a Body of Christ could become fully prepared to enter into possession of all the terms of the strengthened covenant and become the exemplary display of the truth of those provisions and thereby demonstrate to others how they too can take up the strengthened covenant and move into the experiential possession of all that it offers. How much easier it will be for many to see clearly and begin to fully trust Jesus Christ in all He has already proclaimed, when it is visibly demonstrated at the blowing of the 7th Trumpet that even a few human 'earthen vessels' have truly entered into a living of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, having fully overcome all sin and everything the spiritual principalities and powers (Eph.6:12) can bring against them, and have actually shut off the wages of sin, even death in the physical body (Matt.16:28, John 6:50, 58, 8:51, 11:26, Ro.8:23, ICor.15:51). God's program continues as planned, but with the people of other nations 'grafted' into it (Ro.11:13-29), and it will be through the ministry of a true portion of the Church, which will become the glorious Church during the Great Tribulation period, that many of the natural sons of Abraham and many more sons from the nations will finally be joined to Jesus Christ in the strengthened covenant.

God does not play favorites (Ro.2:11) and, during the past almost 2000 years vacated by natural Israel, He has made a period of training and preparation available to those people of all nations who choose to become the spiritual sons of Abraham (Gal.3:7), including all sincere Christians of either Gentile or Jewish origin. As a result of the Jewish nation's refusal to enter the provisions of His contract offer, the Israel now recognized by our Lord has expanded far beyond the physical boundaries of Palestine, even as was prophetically pictured in the Old Testament by the dispersion of the 10 northern tribes of Israel among all nations. God has provided almost 2000 years of exposure to training and preparation to the Christian community so that those of spiritual Israel might also be brought to the level at which they could be presented with the opportunity for accepting the strengthened covenant which would finish and put an end to transgression, seal up and make full the measure of sin, bring in everlasting righteousness in the millenial Kingdom, complete and fulfill the vision and the prophet's disclosure, and anoint a most holy company in the world (Dan.9:24). The refusal of the first offer to the chosen nation is to bring the same offer to the many peoples of all nations.

The same pattern Jesus employed with the two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin is also to be employed with the expanded spiritual Israel. Just as there were about 2000 years of training in natural Israel to prepare for the first coming of Jesus Christ, so there have been almost 2000 years of training available for spiritual Israel to prepare for the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ. Just as there was then a voice ministry of John the Baptist for preparing the way (a people) for the first coming, through repentance, so there is now a voice ministry

DANIEL 2	DANIEL 7	DANIEL 9



(The dates given are approximate)

Egypt's oppression 1600 B.C.

Assyria - - deportation 700 B.C.

Babylon rule of Judah 606 B.C.
Gold:wealth, spiritual wealth. Also the work and impartation of the spirit world. Refined gold is the work of the Holy Spirit.

LION

Fall of Jerusalem 586 B.C.

Daniel 605 - 534 B.C.
Jeremiah 600 B.C.

Cyrus 540 B.C.

Cyrus's proclamation 536 B.C.

New Temple dedication 516 B.C.

Medo-Persian rule 538 B.C.
Silver: less material wealth, soul qualities. Also the need for the work of redemption.

BEAR

Artaxerxes letters to build walls etc. 445 B.C.

Nehemiah 450 B.C.

69 weeks equates to 483 years
483 years of 360 days is 476 years of 365 days.

476 of 365 day years
-32 years - Christ's period of preparation after 1 A.D.
444 B.C. - the time of Artaxerxes letters to rebuild.

Grecian conquest 333 B.C.
Empire divided 328 B.C.
Bronze: less material wealth, knowledge of earthly things. Also learning and philosophy of man. when refined, it is spiritual knowledge and wisdom.

LEOPARD

Rome conquers Israel 63 B.C.
Pagan Roman Empire split 44 B.C.
Iron: more earthy, emphasis on materialism. Also authority and raw power, carnal, ruthless, crushing - as in the God-rejecting countries of communism. Refined, it is God's power in His prepared Sons.

DREADFUL BEAST

Christ's birth 1 A.D.

Christ's personal ministry 32 - 36 A.D.
His ministry continued to the rulers of the Jews by the Apostles into 39 A.D. Stephan's death concluded the 7 year contract.

The strengthened contract specifically with the nation of Israel, to be in force for 7 years.
Christ Himself 32 - 36 A.D.
Apostles to rulers 36 - 39 A.D.
Judah set aside 39 A.D.
Jerusalem destroyed and the Jews dispersed 70 A.D.

Pagan Roman Empire broken 313 A.D.
Revived as 'Christian Rome' 320 A.D., in an amalgamation of pagan ritual and peoples. The Holy Roman Empire influence spreads far beyond the empire boundaries (just as 'spiritual Israel' did). As a result, 'Christendom'picked up the heritage or 'mantle' of Rome. Christendom included Russia and Russia remains an heir to the heritage of the'Iron' empire and dreadful beast, even though its form has changed from that of Christendom

Spiritual Israel picks up the heritage or 'mantle' of physical Israel and is no longer confined to the boundaries of Palestine.

The Holy Roman Empire splits 700-1054 A.D.

The Reformation (Luther et al.) 1520 A.D.
Clay: more earthy, the advance of human knowledge in humanism, self-attainment elevating man through science, technology and learning - ousting God. It is impossible to combine political power and authority with materialism in a stable mixture. It is unstable, prone to fragmentation, requiring a dictatorial rule. Represents weakness also. But the Lord takes weakness and refines it into ruling power (the rod of iron) and into righteousness.

The dreadful beast empire in partnership with 10 rulers.

Christ's personal ministry to His chosen people of physical Israel had already fulfilled 3 1/2 years. He will fulfill the second 3 1/2 years of personal ministry to spiritual Israel through the manifested sons. (He was the first such Son), during the 3 1/2 years of Great Tribulation on a rebellious world.

At the close of the Great Tribulation, the 'Stone' will crush the whole image into worthless chaff, which will utterly blow away.

going out to call for repentance in a people before His 2nd coming. Just as Jesus then brought an offer of a strengthened covenant, beginning with a personal ministry to His first chosen people of natural Israel which extended for a period of 3-1/2 years, so He will yet fulfill the same pattern for spiritual Israel in a second 3-1/2 year period of personal ministry through the manifested sons (Ro.8:18-24) who will then be functioning in His express image to fully and accurately reflect Him during the 3-1/2 years of Great Tribulation now soon to break upon a rebellious world (Rev.11:3). The sons will perform the same function as the Son. However, unlike the refusal of natural Israel at that earlier time to accept Jesus Christ and His strengthened covenant, in this time there will be a prepared and matured portion of the Body of Christ ready to take up the strengthened contract as the understanding of it is opened up the second time, and the victory over sin and Satan and death will be proclaimed and demonstrated by many in our time, just as it was almost 2000 years ago by One. In this end-time of the Age, there will not be the blanket refusal of the covenant offered to spiritual Israel, but there will be a terminating date on which the offering period will expire for those who continue in rebellion.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The period of the Great Tribulation such as the world has never yet experienced and which will never again be experienced (Matt.24:7-8, 21) is referenced in many portions of Scripture. It is pictured specifically and parabolically as a time brought about by man's wickedness, but also as a time at which God has ordained an impasse so that those He loves will have the opportunity to see His mighty hand of deliverance. It is a time when multitudes will be ushered into the 'valley of decision' so that they might have the opportunity to know the living Christ and receive Life forevermore (Joel 3:9-16). It is a time for one fulfillment of the prophecy that every knee must bow to Jesus Christ and every tongue must agree to the full Lordship of Jesus Christ (Isa. 45:22-23, Phil.2:9-11), in heaven because that is one of the requirements for entering, on earth because almost none other will remain there (Acts 3:23), and beneath the earth in the place of the dead because of the overcoming and judgment by Christ (Rev.5:13).

During those few years which will bridge between the Church Age and the Millenium age, at this time of the ends of all the previous ages (ICor. 10:11 literal), there is to be that complete establishment of all that God spoke through His holy prophets in all the previous ages (Acts 3:20-21), Old Testament and New Testament, including even those things which will be the common possession of believers in the Millenial Kingdom of peace and righteousness (Isa.65:17-25). There will be the re-fulfillment in our day of the gold, silver, brass and iron prophecy lumped into one rule. It shall embrace the greater works of all that is past, that is present, and that which is yet still future, making the remnant of the end of our Age the only timeless people ever to come forth and a people knowing no distinction

of dispensation and having no limitations of dispensation (John 14:12). It is a time of mighty works entrusted to the hands of prepared men, signs and wonders and tremendous blessing through the power of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:17-32), but it is also a time for the fulfillment of vengeance and the fulfilling of all things ever written by the prophets against rebellious and wicked people of the world (Lk. 21:22). It is a time of very great Light for the faithful, but in the same period it is a time of exceeding darkness for the rebellious, as the previous ages fade away and the overlap of the new age begins to be evident (Isa.35:4-7, 61:1-4, 63: 3-6).

In a search for other Scripture confirming what seems so apparently to be the duration of this overlapping period common to both the old and the new age, The Great Tribulation (Dan.12:1, Joel 2:1-2, Matt. 24:21), we find there are several other uses of a 3-1/2 unit period associated with and resulting from sin-rebellion which illustrate the Lord's pattern. One such period of affliction as never was or ever will be again, like that referenced in Matt.24:21, is also mentioned in Ex.9:18, 10:14, as a result of rebellion against God. Associated with the affliction at the time of the exodus from Egypt (a type of the world order) was a 3 day period of intense darkness, even while the chosen people received much light (Ex.10:22-23). In Bible application, the round number is typically used to represent a number and a portion. Because of sin, David was asked to choose 3 years of famine, or 3 months of devastation, or 3 days of the sword of the Lord and of pestilence in the land (IChron.21:11-12). Because of rebellion, the people of Moab were exposed to a 3 year period of trouble from which only a small remnant survived (Isa.16: 14). As a result of rebellion, a 3 year period warning of judgment came upon Egypt, a type of the world, through the agency of Assyria, a type for the dominant world power at the end of the Church Age (Isa.20:3-4). Because of sin, the land of Ahab experienced 3 years of famine (IKings 17:1, 18:1, Lk.4:25). As a result of blasphemy, two she bears (a type of the two beasts of Rev.13:1, 11) came out of the forest (2Kings 2: 11-24) and overcame 42 of the teen-agers in the group (a type of the 42 months or 3-1/2 years of Rev.13:5). Because of rebellion, the Saul who became Paul experienced 3 days of darkness (Acts 9:9). At the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, there were about 3 hours of darkness over the whole land before the curtain veiling the Holy of Holies in the temple was torn apart (Lk.23:44-45). The Bible accounts referring to the day of the Lord, the Great Tribulation period, describe darkness, famine, devastation by enemies, pestilence, the appearance of the desolator, and the oppression of the saints. But just as it was in the Exodus picture (Ex.10:22-23), it is also a period in which there is to be great spiritual light and protection available to those who are interested, a period in which God is an effective refuge (Matt.24:7-9, :12-15, :29-31, Lk.21:11-19, :25-28, Isa.24:1-6, :20-23, 25:6-9, 13:6-13, Joel 2:28-32, 3:9-16, Acts 2:17-21).

Although from Bible prophecy we can expect a progressive increase in world troubles from this day to the end of the Age, there is a single portion of this concluding period in which Scripture says the world systems of religion, commerce and government will be crumbled so thoroughly that it will be a time of tribulation or pressure such as the world has never seen nor will ever see again (Rev.16:18-19, 18:21-24). The specific extent of the Great Tribulation is to be a time of 3-1/2 years, a period described as a time, and times, and a dividing of a time or 3-1/2 years (Dan.7:25, 12:7, Rev.12:14), as 42 months (Rev.11:2, 13:5), and as 1260 days (Rev.11:3, 12:6). The Great Tribulation will cover the whole earth and affect all nations (Lk.21:26, 35, Rev.13:5-7); it will be a time when <u>all</u> things written in Scripture will be fulfilled (Lk.21:22). And it is <u>after</u> the saints win a complete victory over the enemy at the closing of the Great Tribulation period that those who have cleansed their own garments (Rev.22:14) and have themselves overcome in battle (Rev. 3:21) will be gathered to Jesus Himself (Matt.24:29-31). Man's interpretation which shows no Church participation in the Lord's battle with Satan, during the Great Tribulation, to completely dispossess him of his empire is only encouraged by wishful thinking and a neglect of <u>personal</u> searching out the Word to see if these things are so (Acts 17:11). There is no Scriptural backing and no valid excuse to support the wide-spread and deceitfully seductive but comfortable teaching that all Christians, regardless of their response and diligence and maturity in what our Lord says He requires, will suddenly be lifted out of this world to recline with Jesus in the heavenlies and from there watch the subsequent Great Tribulation engulf a world of humans whom God says He loves with a fervent love. There is no Scriptural support for a concept prevailing over much of Christendom that all of the world will be suddenly deprived of its Body of Christ and even of the power of the Holy Spirit, leaving Satan and his hosts complete freedom of action with no opposition. This is completely contrary to the whole thrust of the Bible. God will always and continually and effectively war against lawlessness, wherever it may be.

It is necessary in God's plan for Christians to participate in and go through this period of great trouble such as the world has never yet experienced and never will again, and this pattern of participation is pictured again and again in the Bible (Rev.7:13-14, 13:7-10). The chosen people remained <u>in the midst</u> of the plagues of Egypt (a type of the world) and the three days of darkness, but they had supernatural protection and light. The death angel passed through their land and among their houses, but passed over when he saw the blood application to the doorway. Noah and his family remained in the midst of the judgment engulfing the world, but were protected in the ark (a type of Jesus). Daniel's three friends experienced all of the flames of the furnace, but one like the Son of Man was there protecting

them. Daniel experienced the immediate presence of the hungry lions (a type of the satanic host), but was not devoured. Jesus was not spared the 3-1/2 years of physical and spiritual abuse, but He emerged victorious. David's nation experienced the 3 days of the sword of the Lord and of pestilence and emerged. The followers of God also personally knew the deprivations of the 3-1/2 years of no rain and food shortage in Ahab's land, including Elijah, but their needs were provided by God. Paul experienced the 3 days of darkness, but he stood fast and was delivered.

The overcoming of the world, the flesh, and the Devil, in cluding even death of the physical body, is not to be restricted to those saints who will move about in their glorified bodies. There is also the potential now of the saints recognizing, desiring and, through qualifying, appropriating the victory over death here in the end of this Age in their present earthly temples. There is the availability <u>now</u> of the very Life of Christ, of the entrance into the heritage in the Spirit, of participating in the Melchizedek priesthood and of living a spotless, righteous life without blemish, much like that of the Son of God Himself, through the virtue of His abiding presence within. The Bible says that God is bound by His word and His oath, but He is not bound by the dispensations, by general historical procedure, or by the opinions of men. True, it is mentioned in Hebrews that it is appointed unto men once to die, but even though death is quite general Enoch was free to reach up and believe for his translation without experiencing death (Heb. 11:5), and God could not deny him. Nor did God prevent Elijah from being caught up in a chariot of fire without seeing death, when Elijah understood the potential and believed for it (2Kings 2:11). Nor did God move against extending the life of the apostle John for approximately 2000 years, when John understood what God's plan makes available and believed for it; it was not Peter's business, nor was it contrary to God's Word (Mk.9:1, John 21:19-23). Jesus promised He would raise up at the last day all who would believe into His 'name' (appropriate His nature and character) (John 6:40), but that did not prevent Him from bringing Lazarus forth from death before the last day. Anyone who will believe for it and qualify, anyone who will choose to respond to the Lord's revealing (faith comes with the action following the revealing) will not be denied the divine impartation which will change the mortal body into an immortal and incorruptible body, either an earthly incorruptible body such as Jesus had, or a glorified celestial body such as Jesus has. If we have agreed with the Lord for a resurrection at the last day, are we going to have an evil eye if God in His mercy and love imparts the qualities of His own Life to some who qualify before the last day? This promise was first open to Israel in 32-39 AD, and now, almost 2000 years later, is being made clear again to spiritual Israel - to those who will qualify (2Tim.1:10).

Jesus said, 'I AM the Resurrection and the Life' and He was not just referring to an historic event in the distant future. The Resurrection and the

Life is the living Lord Jesus Christ who dwells in the temple of our being by His Spirit. Jesus wept as He yearned to inspire faith-response in Mary and Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, but they, like most Christians today, insisted in believing facts about Him and about God, instead of believing into Him (John 11:23-27, 35, 6:50, 58, 8:51). Jesus wanted them to believe that He was the I AM (John 8:58). They were willing to believe in an historic future resurrection and that Christ was the Messiah, and so are we, but that believing is not sufficient to bring one into the fulness of 'adoption' sonship and possession of our inheritance (Ro.8:13-17, 23). They confessed faith in the fact of resurrection for Lazarus in the last day, but Jesus replied, 'I Am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in Me, although he may die, yet he shall live'. That was the case of Lazarus and all who will not yet believe all that the Prophet spoke. The Lord continued, 'And <u>whoever</u> continues to live and believes in Me, (as the I Am and the Resurrection and the Life) shall never (need to) die at all. Do you believe this?' (John 11:25-26). It is certain we do not believe it, - or we might believe it theoretically, - but how very few have believed it experimentally and demonstrated the sure result. Yet the promise is there, even though we choose to disbelieve it, and the Bible says those who attain to full 'adoption' sonship <u>will</u> be manifesting the Life of Jesus Christ in redeemed and incorruptible bodies in this time, as the manifested sons of God. The Word of Unveiling will grip the hearts of those who are willing and eager for <u>all</u> the Lord offers, and they shall become prepared and appropriate the Resurrection and the Life even now in this life-time. If they should not, Christ could never return to earth in victory, because God has said, 'Sit here at My righthand, <u>until</u> I make your enemies your footstool', the footstool of your <u>feet</u> (Ps.110:1, ICor.15:25-26). The last enemy is death. The feet upon which the whole Body will stand and gain support are those certain few in our generation.

The Bible repetitively states that Jesus will remain where He now is at the righthand of His Father, until <u>all</u> enemies are put under His feet (Ps.110:1, Matt.22:44, Eph.1:22-23, Acts 3:21). In the Body of Christ, Jesus is the Head and the generation living at the time in which all these things take place is the feet (the same sequence of progression as seen in the Dan.2 image picture). How can we possibly conclude that Jesus will violate His demonstrated patterns of action and catch up an infantile, miserable, powerless, defeated, blinded, disease-ridden and adulterous, yet self-satisified, presumptious and arrogant Church to attempt a work in the heavens against an enemy with whom it has consistently been demonstrating an inability to cope? Jesus will not move from His position at the righthand of His Father to be joined with His prepared Body of Christ, until <u>all</u> enemies are under the feet of His Body, - including that of death of the physical body (ICor.15:51-55, Ro.8:23, IThess.5:23). A group of persistent overcomers must rise from within the true Church, which group shall conquer and become absolutely victorious over all the opposing forces of the

world, the flesh and the Devil (Ro.16:20), - before the present Church Age draws to a close, and in spite of the Church attitude.

The Lord's purpose and objective for those of His Body of Christ is not that of their passively waiting for a God, 'who is all love', to unilaterally effect a transition from a world yet abundant with soul-satisfying, material things into a self-indulgent ease in a spiritual realm. The Bible just does not say that. The Bible does say that the Body of Christ is to engage in battle (Eph.6:11-13) with a vastly superior foe (from the human viewpoint) - and win (Ro.8:35-39). The Bible says that it is this prepared and well-trained portion of the Body which is to overcome and completely dispossess the enemies of Jesus, ejecting the enemy beings from all of the promised land in which Satan and his hosts of followers have been unfaithful stewards (Lk.19:22-27). The victors will then possess all of the realm now ruled by Satan so that God's will can become fact on earth as it is in heaven, - with no opposition remaining (Heb.1:13, 2:8).

Satan and his hosts are on one side of the battle, and dedicated, willing and obedient Christians are on the other side. Those whom the Lord will use to engage the enemy in the thick of the battle will be only the sufficiently matured and strengthened Christians (Eph.6:14-18) who have undertaken the purifying and training and who have been adequately tested and proven, for God will permit only those things in battle to come against any Christian which he is able to handle within his attained capabilities (ICor.10:13). Most Christians have not yet permitted the Lord to take them through the sequence of purifying, training, testing and proving, but the Lord can bring deliverance (victory) by many or by few (ISam.14:6). Those in the front lines of battle will need to have been trained to handle whatever Satan himself and his higher echelon demons can bring against the Body of Christ; there is to be no giving way, not any. The initial field of intense battle is to be in that gaseous envelope surrounding the earth, out to about 4500 miles. It is in that portion of his realm that prepared and trained Christians will first come against Satan and his hosts in front line fighting, and there will be a complete victory for the saints which will eject all of the enemy hosts from that part of Satan's empire. Michael and his agents, including earth men who have been specifically empowered and equipped for this phase of the battle, will cast down Satan and his angels from his heaven (Eph.2:2) to the surface of the earth and its near atmosphere (Rev.12:7-9). In order for prepared humans to participate in this aerial phase of the consummating battle against demon principalities and powers, a company of Christians who have made themselves ready is selected and given glorified physical bodies to enable a successful facing and conquering of the enemy in his own realm surrounding the earth (Rev.12:4-5). Following this casting down, another company of Christians, the still earth-bound army of the Lord made up of prepared saints remaining on earth during the time of the battle, will take up the contest on the earth's surface to wrest the remainder of

Satan's empire from his grasp. The time of this warfare with Satan's hosts on the surface of the earth is the period of Great Tribulation (Rev.12:14-17), during which Satan attempts to incite men to destroy the world and each other (Matt.24:22). The scene is the surface of the earth and the action is in an environment of trouble such as the earth has never yet experienced and never will again. The destroyer, Satan, is then cast into the final and decisive battle which will determine who gets his empire or whether there will be anything left to possess. But the outcome is foreseen and is promised to be a complete and absolute victory by which Satan and all his agents, demon and human, are forced to relinquish the whole stewardship to Jesus Christ and His Army and are totally denied even a small corner of what has been theirs. The strategy of our Lord is awesome. He will have two armies capable of victory in the power of His Spirit (not without Him), one in the outer realms surrounding this planet and the other on the surface of the planet itself; Jesus will not vacate His position of strength by the removal of His earthly army or His Holy Spirit empowerment from the battleground before the forces of the enemy are utterly destroyed and removed from off the face of the earth. Then and only then His Kingdom of peace and righteousness will begin to cover the whole earth, because there will be almost no soul remaining on earth who will refuse it.

When the saints on earth clearly have the victory, those who have prepared themselves to reign and rule with Christ, in the heavenly New Jerusalem, having run the race and <u>won</u> the crown (ICor.9:24-25), will be raised up at the end of the Great Tribulation during the final sounding of the 7 Trumpets of Rev.8, 9 and 10 (ICor.15:52-55). In their glorified bodies they will be with Jesus Christ to share His throne and His rule in His heavenly Kingdom in that New Jerusalem situated in the heavenlies (Rev.2:26-27, 3:21). The winners of the heavenly <u>prize</u> who have died will be raised first and then immediately the prize winners who are still alive will accompany them (IThess. 4:15-17). Soon thereafter, Christ's ruling authority over the earth will begin to issue out of the heavenly New Jerusalem (Rev.21:10, 22:2) which will then have become visible in the sky, and the administration of Christ's rule over the nations will begin to issue from the earthly Jerusalem in Palestine (Jer.3:17).

PROPHECY ON THE 10 TRIBES

Daniel was given specific prophecy on the events and opportunities to be presented to the two southern tribes of Israel, Judah and Benjamin (Dan.9:24), and prophecy also was given him about the northern 10 tribes among the nations, but not so specifically. The 10 tribes had been deported and dispersed among the nations during the Assyrian occupation of Palestine, losing their distinctive identity and becoming known as the 'lost' 10 tribes of Israel. Although these 10 tribes cannot be identified with any segment

of the human race today, a remnant of each tribe has been preserved down through the years, known only to God. God commanded and He sifted the house of Israel (the 10 tribes) among all the nations, like grain is sifted in a sieve, and yet not the least kernal shall fall upon the earth and be lost (Amos 9:8-9). The 'sieve' has thoroughly mixed the 10 tribes among the gentile nations and the members have not retained a separate and distinct identity; they are not known even to themselves. But because of the promise made to Abraham and his seed, God will yet gather a remnant of each of the tribes out of the nations and will place those remnants once again in the promised land. Since they are known only to God, it will take a special act of providence and revelation to separate them and cause them to return to the land of their fathers (Isa.65:8-10). The return will not take place, however, until the land has been purged and made ready, for the Lord Jesus Himself will first shake the land by touching His feet on the Mount of Olives (Zech.14:4) and will take away the iniquity of the land by the fire of His presence (2Thess.1:6-9).

It is also true that although the 10 tribes cannot be identified with any modern nations or group of nations by lineal descent, yet there is a spiritual sense in which certain nations can be properly considered the 'Israel of God' in harmony with the transfer of the Kingdom inheritance from the natural to the spiritual seed of Abraham. There is, according to pattern, a spiritual counterpart to the tribes of Israel in evidence among the Christian nations of today, - for these counterparts would of necessity have to be ones with a Christian heritage and culture, even though greatly defiled in many ways.

Because of the special purpose God has for one of these 'tribes' of end time spiritual Israel, a prophetic relationship has been given. It is written that Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel and that Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder or horned snake in the path, that bites at the horse's heels so that his rider shall fall backward (Gen.49:16-17). It was the son of a woman of Dan, with an Egyptian father, that blasphemed the name of the Lord and had to be stoned after the children of Israel had departed out of the land of Egypt (Lev.24:10-16, 23). It was the tribe of Dan that marched north and took territory not assigned to it. And it was the children of Dan who apostacized, set up the graven image of Micah and employed a Levite who had turned to idols as their tribal priest (Judges 17:12-13, 18:1-31). It was on the north that the standard of the tribe of Dan was erected when the Israelites camped in the wilderness (Num.2:25).

And it is from the north that God has decreed judgment to come upon the tribes of both natural and spiritual Israel (Ezek.38:14-16, Joel 2:20). In the sealing of the tribes prophetically pictured in Rev.7:5-8, the tribe of Dan is omitted, and Rev.13:1 pictures the beast out of the sea of human emotions as having the name of blasphemy

upon its heads. This corresponds to the type mentioned in the Lev. 24:10-23 passage, where a man of Dan blasphemed the name of the Lord. In its modern spiritual counterpart, the tribe of Dan is represented by a nation which is anti-God, has apostacized <u>from</u> Christianity and has taken upon its head the name of blasphemy. It must be a nation which has repudiated the Lord God and cursed the name of Jesus Christ, occupies territory in the north, and is capable of bringing judgment by military action against the other nations. Only one nation satisfies the conditions. That nation, which is the seat of the sea-beast of communism, which is positioned in the uttermost north, which is the serpent in the path (Satanic control) and which will bring the other 'tribes' or nations of Christendom under judgment of war, is Russia. It can be none other.

Russia is the portion of the extended Holy Roman Empire, through the Greek Orthodox Church. Russia has apostacized and has accumulated the strength to bring the judgment of war on all of Christendom. In the description of the descent of the forces of Gog upon end-time Israel, it is written that they fell upon the mountains of Israel (Ezek.39:2, 4). In Scripture, a mountain is symbolic of a kingdom or nation. Thus it is pictured symbolically and prophetically that the end-time Israel is more than one tiny nation in the land of Palestine. End-time Israel is also a group of mountains, Christian nations of <u>spiritual</u> Israel, which shall feel the wrath of the beast system of communism under the leadership of Russia-Dan when the final staging of the end-time drama takes place.

Why do we say there is only one nation which can possibly fulfill the prophecy of the beast nation of the end of our Age? Couldn't one of several other nations develop its power in to world rule as the years roll by? Why couldn't one of the Popes be that anti-Christ? How do we know the USA will not become that dreadful and terrible beast? The answers are not too hard, if we use the whole of the Bible and think.

From the words of Jesus, we know that all things must be fulfilled <u>before</u> the generation passes away which was alive at the time of Israel's budding into national existence again. We are now approaching 30 years of elapsed time since the budding, and the period of a generation is usually considered to be about 30 years, or possibly a little more. It then has to follow that the beast power under consideration <u>must</u> already be almost strong enough to act out its prophetic role of world dominion. Weaker nations just don't have the time to develop, even if they had the resources. It has to be a nation <u>now</u> almost strong enough and <u>now</u> with enough military reserves. It should be rather obvious to the thinking mind that the world power of this anti-Christ must be a well organized and well equipped military power. No ecclesiastical body could fulfill the many prophecies which speak of raw military force such as the beast power will employ in <u>making</u> peoples captive. In the area of military resources alone, we

could place only two nations of the world even in the potential position of being able to subdue the world. Russia is one and the other is the USA, which built Russia to where she is and will yet pay dearly for that disobedience to God. Both Russia and the USA individually control more than enough weapons necessary to eliminate all life from the face of the earth. Both have the means to deliver these weapons on target. However, the USA does not fulfill the other prophetic descriptions. Although the USA is not very serious about its stand in pure Christianity, there is no conceivable way in which the USA could change its people to directly repudiate God and Jesus Christ within only the few years remaining within this generation. The USA does not occupy a geographic position in the uttermost north from Palestine. Nor has the USA had its religious derivation directly from either side of the Holy Roman Empire. The USA has never had a State religion. Its religious background is from many groups of different persuasion. With all the prophecies taken together, Russia is the only possible fulfillment of the dreadful beast which rises out of the sea of human lust for self-fulfillment.

Here again we see that God's Word cannot be confined to a single fulfillment or application. His Word is rich and many-sided, having many facets of truth, all conformed to the one basic pattern of truth which has been dramatized through the history and institutions of the seed of Abraham and based on the immutable oath God made when declaring His purposes to Abraham. God will teach by His Spirit, so we need not listen to the carnal reasonings of those who have eaten the tare seed of the enemy (Matt.13:25). This is the day in which God will bring all things to light, and in which no thing shall remain hidden (Mark 4:22), - to those who are searching and asking and listening.

THE FILLING UP OF PROPHECY

Jesus said that the man who really believes in Him will do the same works that Jesus did and will do even greater works than these, because Jesus has been glorified and has taken His position at the throne of His Father (John 14:12). What is the key to the greater works Jesus prophesied would happen? The Holy Spirit universalized the moving of Christ's ministry into a many-membered Body, but the unique manifestation of the Body of Christ will come forth in the end-time when, in a very special way, a portion of the Church is purified, united and raised up. This unique manifestation will be more than a restoration to the status of the early New Testament Church. The New Testament principles and practices will be restored as a part of the establishment of what God will do today, but the Lord will move even farther and the early New Testament Church will be far more than reproduced. All the things prophesied in the Old and New Testaments will also emerge. This is the time for the establishment of all things spoken of by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. The Lord's moving today is more than a restoration of the New Testament; it is everything from the Old and New Testaments, on up to the present, and

this move will reach as well into the things of the age to come, bringing them into the present. Within a short time now, some will walk in an establishment of the greater works of all that is past, present, and that which is still future. A full prepared and purified fractional part of the Body will be the only timeless people ever to come forth, a people that will know no distinction of dispensation and will have no limitations of dispensation. This is prophetic revelation far beyond what the organized Churches are presenting. As we stand before the Lord, we will see the restrictions of the past, of the present, and even any restrictions of the future age removed from that remnant which demands God's full plan in the end-time.

One of the most important keys that will come forth at this time to help the people is the learning <u>how</u> to become instruments of Diety. The learning will first of all have to engage spirit control from the Holy Spirit, instead of soul or self-control. A common focus of the members of the Body of Christ upon any one thing that is presented to them as a Body will do more than any ministry or combination of ministries that have ever existed from the days of the Book of Genesis up to the present hour. We have not understood this enabling. There has to be a breaking through beyond the present limitations in our minds. We know we are on the verge of changes, because the minute we begin to open up to the potential, immediately satanic pressures come against us. The end-time sons of God will find that the restrictions on mere man will be removed from them, placing them on a plane of individual authority that resembles that of Jesus Christ. God created man to first gain dominion over his inner world and then gain dominion over the outer world. Sometime after the fall of man (at the time of the flood), everything within him became limited and fogged - reduced to only a fraction of what he can have -, but the end-time sons of God will be raised up into the fulness of God's plan.

Do you understand how man should control things? Have you heard of people who could control the growth of plants to a limited degree, who by their presence could cause plants to wither or to grow rapidly? Jacob was able to control the heredity in the markings of an entire flock of animals by the striped stakes he set before them. Do you believe it is possible for one human being to control another animate being or to control inanimate objects by the power of his mind? The prophet Elijah was able to control weather and the power of life and death; he could bring fire out of heaven to devour his adversaries, even as is prophesied for the two witnesses of Rev.11:4-6. In measure, the prophets moved in the control of the animate and the inanimate world; they had some dominion over the natural realm and they moved somewhat freely in the spiritual realm, yet all this was limited. These enablings are only shadows of what man is to have when God places him in dominion over all the work of His hands, - first the inner 'world' and then the outer world.

What do you think will happen in the end-time when the

limitations and restrictions are removed? Can you begin to understand now why you are under pressure and why all 'hell' breaks loose against you when you become serious about this potential? It is because we are coming toward a breakthrough. In our Christian walk, many things are important, but the greatest thing with which we can be occupied in this hour is to break through and then, with limitations removed, minister to people and bring to them the glorious message of the full Kingdom for here and now. This good news of Christ's Kingdom, with all of its force and power being substantiated and with a clear testimony of its Lord and His exaltation, is to be preached in all the world for a witness. Before the Bowls of Wrath are poured out in judgment to cleanse the earth of its refuse, the world will receive one more witness, - the most fantastic, supernatural, powerful, miraculous, judgment-sweeping ministry that the world has ever seen. And you can share in it, if you will permit yourself to become qualified.

This is the day for the establishment, the restitution, the restoration. These are the three words used in various translations of Acts 3:20-21, which speak of the time of the establishment, the restitution, or the restoration (literally the leaving of all that man has instituted) of all things which God has spoken by the mouths of all His holy prophets since the world began. The heavens must receive and retain or contain Jesus until the time for this establishment.

When you worship, do you just sing along or are you really worshipping the majestic Lord who is coming to be glorified in the believer, and is to be exalted in the believer, whose very presence is to be admired in His saints? (2Thess.1:10). When you read the Bible, do you read carefully and thoroughly? If you are a casual reader or a speed reader of the Scriptures, you will be deceived, because you will read about Jesus and the disciples, about Judas and the betrayal, about the persecutions and difficulties, about the One who was despised and rejected by men and misunderstood - for though the world was made by Him, the world knew Him not. But in this hour, Jesus is coming to be glorified, not betrayed, and He is coming to be admired, not despised. Those who use the title of the Lord Jesus Christ with four letter words are coming to the hour in which they will be judged by even the presence of people who know how to walk with God. The prophets spoke of the Lamb who was to be the sacrifice, but He is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah who came to be its King and now is soon coming to be Lord and King over all the earth (Rev.19:11-16).

John wrote that we should walk as Jesus walked and become pure as He is pure (IJohn 2:3, 3:3). We should really know what this walk is about. The veil has been over so many things while God was preparing us. Jesus said, 'I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled' (Lk.12:49). In our generation, it is soon to be, so don't be confused about what the Lord is coming to do with this walk. He is not coming to bless all the Churches, to give a shot of adrenalin to the old corpse to

make it dance again, to put patches on old clothing, or to glue up leaky water pots (Jer.2:13, 18:4). He is coming to bring death and destruction to the old order of things and to bring forth the birth of the new. The so-called charismatic renewal did not build churches, it tore them apart. Pastors were separated from their congregations, congregations were decimated and split. What happens when God starts to move? Judgment begins at the house of the Lord (IPet. 4:17-18). The presentation of the faith taught by Yahweh-Jesus is not going to be acceptable, neither will it be pleasant, to the rank and file church congregation or to its leaders.

The next step in this walk will be revolutionary as well as a blessing, when we begin to invade 'Babylon', especially the ecclesiastical, with guerrilla tactics and leave it in a shambles. In Rev.18, the people of the world weep when 'Babylon' comes down. There is a weeping and wailing in their hearts as they see the glory and grandeur of 'Babylon' destroyed (Rev.18:9-11). They hate to see the collapse and destruction of the great religious, commercial and political fabric which has held so many of man's enterprises together. Don't think that this will trouble only a few churches, for God wants to bring an end to the old order and He will destroy it by His Word as the people stand and prophesy. By human reasoning this sounds fantastic, but your heart should leap within you for that new day which is soon here.

The Spirit of God is yearning within us that the plane of prophecy (speaking forth His Word of truth) should rise to become creative with His judgment, so that we shall speak and impart living words to transform and change people as they hear them - the kind of words the living Christ spoke to His disciples, 'Now you are clean, through the Word I have spoken to you' (John 15:3). Attain to and see and continue to see yourself clean and purged, removed from every contamination of this Age, because you can and are expected to be, as it is prophesied (Ro.8:13). This overcoming of the 'flesh', the Devil and the world, including death, is for the many-membered Body, as Christ speaks to His people again. The ends of the earth will hear the songs of Zion, and the powers of hell will tremble.

We are to stop interpreting the Book of Revelation in the way that Satan has inspired men without revelation to interpret it. Much of it has been fulfilled and the traditional ways of interpreting it are more dead and false than the interpretations of the Scribes and Pharisees in the days when the Church came forth. The apostles were anointed to see things in the Word that so upset the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the chief priests that they were ready to kill them as heretics, because they thought the new insights were false doctrine - but they were not. We read the New Testament today and it makes the Old Testament alive, and vice-versa, but the Jews and most Christians still are

blinded when they read the Old Testament, because they never received that revelation to know what it is about (Rev.12:9). Likewise, those who read the New Testament at this time with no other interpretations than dispensational or traditional teaching of the Church are missing what God is doing (Lk.18:8). The most significant thing that has happened in the last 2000 years is the present restoring of the faith to the Body of Christ and you can't find it in any of the traditional interpretations of the Bible, because there was no revelation of it in them. God is bringing us revelation and will bring us revelation, and we are being and probably will be called heretics, but the revelation will show us how to make the restoration happen and how to walk in its purity. The key of knowledge is being restored to the Church and Wisdom is being returned (Hos.4:6). God is restoring His authority to a people being born out of the faithful Church, and He will heal His people through them.

Why are some of you being drawn to a re-discovery of Truth and toward a different Church concept as it is actually patterned in Scripture? Because the Lord is enlightening your hearts. Why do you cling to this approach in the midst of conflict and battle and assault? Because the Lord has given you a revelation of Himself, limited as it yet might be. Don't say, 'I'm going to have a walk with God'; you now have a walk with God, but you need to make more of it, much more of it. You need to continuously overcome the spiritual adultery of this Age that is gripping human spirits to destroy and bring down. You need to continuously overcome passivity in your mind and spirit and to apply that which God has provided to loose you and purge you within and without, until you are transformed into His purity by the renewing of your mind to parallel His, and you then know the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. He places all that is necessary before us, but it is our own initiative that puts it into action and fulfillment, through the faith He then supplies (Gal.5:6, John 14:21).

In contemporary revelations from the Lord, He is showing us things that are going to come, and He is encouraging us to go ahead in spite of the absolute inadequacy and insufficiency of each one of us. None of this that God will do is to happen because of anything naturally in us. God is raising up the poor of the world to make them rich in The faith and heirs of the Kingdom. The marvel of our time will be His grace poured out upon an unworthy and inadequate people. Was it because of Samson's biceps that he could pull up the gates and carry them to a hilltop 10 miles away? No, for the Word says that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and the greatest mystery among the Philistines was the source of his strength, for they could not find it in the man.

God will do signs and wonders, and the people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits (Dan.11:32).

The key is in knowing Him experientially and walking with Him (Deut.8:2-3). It's in His grace, in His love, and in His mercy that He comes down upon us, and He will clothe and blanket us with Himself so that, if we have the desire, we will be bold as lions, fierce as tigers, walking in where angels fear to tread, doing the works of the Lord. What did they say about the early disciples? That they were ignorant and unlearned men was the general consensus - and who is afraid of ignorant and unlearned men? They were! And they tried to stone them and kill them to get rid of them, because they were turning the world upside down. They were the lever that God used on the whole world.

Lord, we call upon our hearts to be dedicated to become that purified people You want us to be, - not out of our own ability, but because we are going to draw, under your grace, as we have never drawn before, to put on the righteousness of God as we have never dared to appropriate before. We are going to throw aside our submitting to evil, our prior concepts of your Word, our hang-ups and our problems and inadequacies, and draw upon the unlimited provisioning of God, the excellencies of Your power and authority. O Father, by the grace of God, this is not idle boasting. We know we are speaking the way it must be, by the path in which You have chosen for it to be fulfilled. By the grace of God, we <u>rise up</u> to worship You with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. - To love you. Amen.